

Best Value for Tax Dollars

Improving Service Quality in the Ontario Government

**A REPORT TO THE
ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE**



FEBRUARY 1992

Continuous Improvement Services Inc.
and Erin Research Inc.

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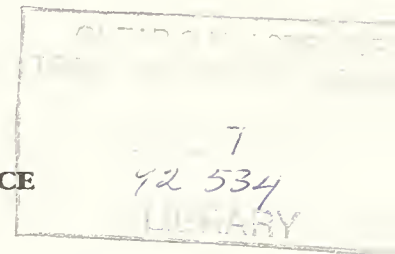
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FOREWORD

There are few organizations, public or private, who are not involved in an effort to improve service to their customers. The establishment of a committee of Deputy Ministers in 1990, and of the Customer Service Task Force early in 1991, signalled the government's recognition of the importance of improving customer service within our own large and complex organizations in the Ontario Public Service. The Task Force has taken the position that not only is service the most important business of government, but service is everybody's business.

This research project, designed and managed by the Task Force, is in many ways, a ground-breaking initiative. The work has been planned and conducted in partnership with OPSEU and with the approval of Cabinet. For the first time, advice was sought from thousands of Ontario citizens who use provincial services, from public servants who deliver those services—both to the public and to their own colleagues, and from a private sector Think Tank. The information collected contains some plain truths about where our service needs to improve, but we also received some practical suggestions for where and how to focus our plans for improvement.

The Task Force's work is timely. Against the backdrop of economic constraint, multiple demands on resources, and increasing complexity of our services, we must examine our business practices to ensure their effectiveness and efficiency in meeting our customers' service needs. The severity of our current financial situation dictates that we must find more efficient ways of financing our businesses by redeployment of resources, by streamlining of our organizations, and by employing appropriate technology.

Our vision must be to commit to high quality service delivery that achieves the best value for tax dollars anywhere. The leadership challenge to accomplish this mission is large. We must accept it. Ministries and central agencies must work together to set priorities, remove barriers and undertake bold strategies to meet the service expectations of our customers. Ontario's citizens deserve no less.

The research findings point to a need for central agencies to assume a leadership role in creating a practical and flexible approach to organizational change. For ministries, the call is to create and manage their service improvement strategies in full partnership with the Union and with the involvement of all levels of staff, especially those with "front line" responsibility.

Our willingness to change is on the rise. Everyone is talking about service quality. We can accomplish amazing things together. The time is now.



Glenna Carr
Secretary
Management Board
of Cabinet

Best Value for Tax Dollars

Improving Service Quality in the Ontario Government

THE REPORT IN SUMMARY

1. THE SERVICE QUALITY IMPERATIVE

Globalization, free trade, world-wide recession and constitutional issues are sending shock waves throughout the Ontario Government. Many of the factors that contribute to these events are beyond the direct control of Ontario. However, provincial priorities and resource redeployment are controllable issues.

Why should service quality be a top priority?

In an increasingly competitive global arena, the quality and value for tax dollars of government service is fundamental to Ontario's economic success. Ontario's ability to attract and retain investment is in part dependent on the quality and cost of government services. The quality of government service is also critical to supporting a high standard of living and social equity in Ontario.

The challenge facing government in a time of diminishing resources and increasing service demands is how to provide better service with fewer resources. The government must rethink its fundamental business assumptions.

Ontario must challenge the beliefs and assumptions created by past success and recognize the new imperatives for change. Both the Public

and the Ontario Public Service (OPS) want improvement. The goal must be to provide better service at a lower cost of delivery; better service will save money by eliminating waste.

2. CUSTOMER SERVICE TASK FORCE BACKGROUND

The Ontario Government established a Committee of Deputy Ministers in the summer of 1990 and the Customer Service Task Force early in 1991 to investigate ways to improve customer service across the OPS.

The mandate of the Task Force is to provide corporate direction and support in order to encourage high quality customer service practices on a consistent and widespread basis throughout the OPS. The Task Force, a corporate project, is headed by the Secretary of Management Board of Cabinet. The membership of the Steering Committee is described on the last page of this report.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research was commissioned by the Ontario Government to determine what the Public and OPS employees think about Ontario Govern-

ment service generally. The research project was undertaken by two firms - Continuous Improvement Services Inc. and Erin Research Inc.

The research was designed to provide the Task Force with the following information:

- whether the Public and the OPS hold similar or different perspectives on service quality provided by the Government of Ontario
- the barriers to and opportunities for providing high quality customer service
- a framework for developing strategies that improve service to the Public

The report describes current Public perceptions of services provided directly by the Ontario Government. It does not examine specific services as they are the responsibility of line ministries. The research also does not examine specific service entitlements, policies or legislation. Instead, the purpose of the research is to provide a framework for service quality improvement which can be applied to all services of the Ontario Government.

4. RESEARCH METHOD

The research was implemented through a series of progressive activities: Public and OPS developmental focus groups; a private Think Tank session; parallel surveys of approximately 2,000 members of the Ontario Public and 2,000 OPS employees; and, a series of seven strategy formulation workshops involving all levels of the OPS.

The research assessed Public opinion in relation to those services provided directly by the OPS and excluded those provided by third parties such as hospitals and schools. Four direct service businesses were investigated: Registration, Information, Financial Assistance and Enforcement/Justice. These businesses include most of the direct services of the Ontario Government.

5. KEY FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

Overall, the Public ranked the service of the Ontario Government higher than that of the fed-

eral government, but below Canada Post, municipal governments, and three private sector organizations (a department store, bank or trust company, and supermarket).

The OPS accurately anticipated that the Public would rank the Ontario Government this way in relation to federal and municipal governments. Four out of five members of the Public do not believe they are receiving good service value for their money. At the same time, 70% do believe that improving service quality will save money. The OPS agrees with this.

Both the Public (62%) and members of the OPS (77%) agree that service is getting more complicated. Only 23% of the Public and 31% of the OPS, believe that service is getting better.

Fast service, number of contacts and cost are the factors that are most strongly associated with customer satisfaction. Those who get service quickly tend to rate government performance on a par with private service providers such as banks and department stores. Those who wait for long periods of time or who require many contacts to get service, tend to rate performance very low. It should be noted that the business of government, which includes such tasks as taxation and enforcement of regulations may limit customer satisfaction in certain areas.

The Public and OPS rated a set of elements of service including accurate information, knowledgeable staff, and easy-to-understand procedures. The Public and the OPS are in quite close agreement that these elements define important attributes of service quality. On the other hand, members of the Public rate OPS performance on these same elements at 64 out of 100, while members of the OPS rate their own performance at 84.

Does the Public hold unreasonable service expectations that would create this difference in perception of government performance? The answer is clearly no: on a set of 14 measures of promptness and efficiency in service delivery, the OPS set more demanding standards in every case.

The different perceptions of OPS performance are indicative of two fundamental dynamics, first, that the OPS does not fully understand how the Public views its performance, and second, that internal obstacles can thwart even the best efforts of individuals to deliver good service.

The OPS readily identifies these internal obstacles. The top barriers to providing good service are:

- lack of staff—high workloads
- internal bureaucracy
- lack of financial incentives for good performance
- slow approval processes

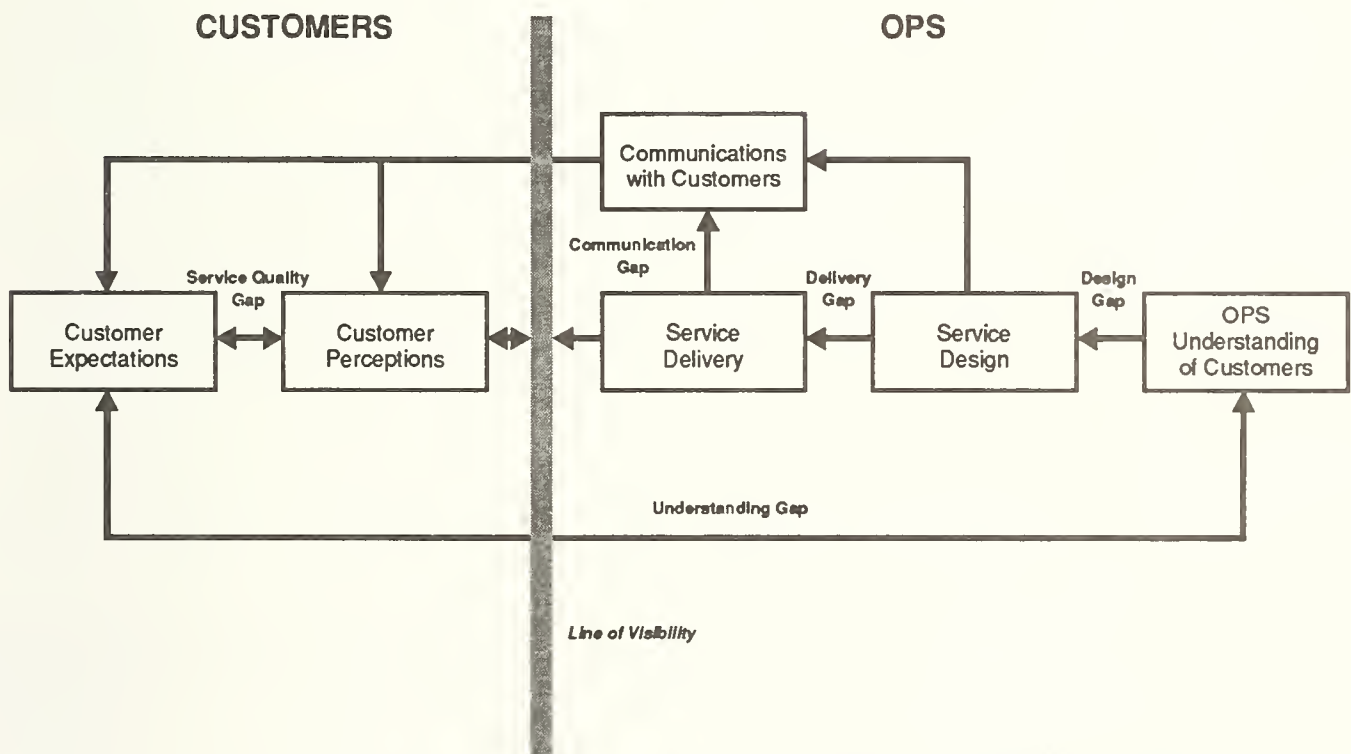
This same set of items, with the addition of greater opportunities for training, are seen to be the best opportunities for improving service. Staff recognize that reducing obstacles such as inter-

nal bureaucracy and slow approval processes will reduce workloads and diminish pressure to increase staff. They also emphasize that recognition and rewards for good customer service will improve performance and increase efficiency.

6. A SERVICE QUALITY MODEL

The following pages describe a Service Quality Model* and the key strategies to improve customer service in the Ontario Government.

The Service Quality Model consists of five major gaps. The model represents the essential components of the service experience from the customer's perspective and from the OPS perspective. The customer's reality is depicted by the two left-hand boxes, consisting of Service



* Adapted from Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985)

Expectations and Service Perceptions. The OPS's view is summarized by the four boxes to the right: Understanding of Customers, Service Design, Service Delivery and Communication with Customers.

The two views are separated by a 'line of visibility'. The customer sees little of the 'behind the scenes' processes and policies that affect the quality of service.

Customers readily describe what is important to them and their satisfaction with service but they cannot be expected to know how to "fix the system" behind the line of visibility. Nonetheless, customer observations help identify the most important opportunities and highest priorities for service improvement.

Customers assess service quality by comparing the service they receive with the service they expect. Service quality is therefore measured on two dimensions:

- customers' expectations of the service they **should receive** from the OPS
- customers' perceptions of the service they **actually received** from the OPS

Members of the OPS used the research results and the Service Quality Model to develop strategies that would close the identified gaps. Each of the strategies has been assessed by the OPS Strategy Workshop participants as:

- likely to have a high impact on improving customer service
- requiring few resources, in fact, many should save money
- actionable, in many cases, without delay
- within the control of ministries, for the most part
- having a high likelihood of acceptance because the OPS is ready for change
- reflecting the practices of a growing number of ministries

THE PUBLIC IS NOT GETTING THE QUALITY OF SERVICE IT EXPECTS

The Service Quality Gap is the difference between the Public's expectations of service

quality and their perceptions of OPS performance. Overall, only one in five members of the Ontario Public perceive that they are getting good value for tax dollars. The Ontario Public perceives the overall quality of services provided by the Ontario Government to be lower than other service providers assessed in the survey with the exception of the federal government.

The Public rates satisfaction with the government's four major direct service businesses—Registration, Information, Financial Assistance and Enforcement/Justice—higher than it rates the performance of the Ontario Government overall. When rating a specific recent experience with Ontario Government service, the Public rates service performance even higher than the four direct service businesses. The more specific the service experience, the higher the performance rating.

The Public sees timeliness, number of contacts, accessibility, reliability, responsiveness and cost as fundamentals of quality service. The factors that most strongly affect ratings of service performance are the number of contacts needed and the time required to complete the service. Customers are "reasonable" in their expectations and they can be satisfied.

- ✕ Every demographic group within the Ontario population disagrees with the position that Ontario Government services provide "good value for money". The various groups differ only in the strength of their disagreement with this statement. Those who use government services for personal rather than business reasons rate performance higher, on average, than those who use them for business reasons.

The Public's perception of Ontario Government services varies with age, occupation, income, and urban-rural residency. Older and retired people, those with lower incomes, those living in the North, and Franco-Ontarians tend to be more satisfied with the quality of Ontario Government services. Conversely, business managers and owners, office and factory workers, tradespeople, residents of rural areas (other than the North) and those with higher incomes are least satisfied.

Interestingly, both the Public and OPS agree that “services are *not* good value for tax dollars” and “improving service quality should save money”. The Public wants improved timeliness, fewer contacts, easier access, greater reliability and more responsiveness at lower cost.

Since a Service Quality Gap exists, the contributing factors need to be addressed. The contributing factors are organized by the Service Quality Model into four remaining gaps:

- Gap in OPS Understanding of Customers
- Service Design Gap
- Service Delivery Gap
- Communication Gap

THE OPS DOES NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND HOW THE PUBLIC VIEWS ITS PERFORMANCE

The OPS Understanding Gap is the difference between Public views of service quality and OPS views about the quality of its own services. The OPS accurately understands what is important to Public customers—OPS External Service Providers do not need to be convinced of the importance of customer service. While the Public and the OPS both agree with the following statements, the OPS holds these opinions **more strongly** than does the Public:

- services are getting more complicated
- regulations and policies are not applied consistently
- the language in forms and documents is hard to understand
- staff are not properly trained and qualified

It should be noted that these are opinions regarding the government in general, and may involve some degree of stereotyping shared by both the Public and the OPS. However, the Public tends to disagree with the OPS that:

- the OPS treats people equally
- OPS staff are overworked and cannot give customers individual attention

Although the OPS accurately understands how the Public perceives government service as a whole, the OPS does not accurately understand

how the Public perceives specific service experiences. As individuals, members of the OPS consistently over-rate their own performance and that of their work-group by a large margin when compared to Public ratings. The OPS lack objective measures of performance and direct feedback from their customers.

Internal Customers

OPS internal customers and Internal Service Providers rate the importance of ‘internal’ services in a very similar way. Highest ranked are Information Technology, Human Resources and Policy Formulation Services. Lowest ranked is Accommodation Services. Internal Services tend to be seen as much less important by all OPS.

The importance of the relationship between External and Internal customers may not be understood as only 53% of those who serve the Public stated that they also served Internal Customers. Internal Service Providers also consistently over-rate their individual and work group performance and yet are dissatisfied with the quality of service they receive from other Internal Service Providers.

Internal Service Providers see complexity as less of an issue—perhaps because they are the specialists. As well, Internal Service Providers lack direct feedback from customers on service performance.

Strategies to close the Understanding Gap

Get closer to customers. Identify who the customers are and determine the nature of their involvement in the service process. Get customers to define their requirements. Customers relate primarily to those parts of the service process that they experience directly. How quickly can they get what they want and at what cost? Fortunately, as the research shows, the Public is generally reasonable.

Seek direct feedback from customers on OPS performance. Each service unit must

identify what is important to its customers and then find the best ways to measure it. On-going measurement and feedback will enable service units to correct their course by identifying gaps between customer expectations and perceptions of service quality. Customer satisfaction measures should be established for both the process and the output. Measurement of customer satisfaction must be a priority.

Communicate customer-defined standards of quality with the work group. Establishing measures, setting standards, ensuring the system is capable of meeting the standards, and communicating the standards to the Public will be essential to the success of OPS service quality improvement efforts. Standards of service must be specific to each program and its customers rather than centrally imposed. Standards that are centrally imposed become 'rules' developed by those who are farthest away from the customer.

Rules become bureaucratic and inflexible. Standards must be dynamic and must change as customer needs change. Each OPS service unit will need to determine the satisfaction thresholds for their customers and set realistic service standards.

As an initial step, set achievable service quality targets. The strategy is to set progressively higher standards until customer expectations are met and costs of delivery are lowered.

Provide timely feedback on performance to staff. Feedback must be constructive and goal-oriented not problem-oriented; it must recognize that people inherently want to do a good job.

Increase the awareness of the importance of Internal Services. Whereas OPS External Service Providers do not need to be convinced of the importance of customer service, the data suggest there is such a need regarding Internal Service. Therefore, programs are needed to heighten OPS awareness of the importance of internal service and its impact on the provision of service to the Public.

SERVICES ARE NOT DESIGNED TO MEET CUSTOMER REQUIREMENTS

The Design Gap is the difference between the OPS's understanding of their customers and the design of OPS service systems. Key policies and management systems are not aligned to serve customers at either the service unit level or government-wide. The present accountability framework reinforces risk avoidance. Classification, recognition and reward and compensation are not related to service quality. The Surplus List causes extensive delays in filling vacant positions. Financial management practices (Consolidated Revenue Fund) create disincentives for efficiencies and savings by the OPS.

Resources are not deployed to provide the best value for tax dollars. The OPS attributes this to:

- lack of clear priorities
- too many different service structures for customers to relate to
- lack of properly trained staff
- extensive delays in staff replacement
- staff absences (illness, vacation, absenteeism)
- lack of planning for peak workload periods

The major barriers and opportunities to be addressed in service quality improvement as identified by the OPS include:

- lack of staff and high workloads
- slow approval processes
- internal bureaucracy
- lack of incentives for good performance
- lack of staff training

At a general level, these barriers and opportunities are similarly understood by both OPS External and Internal Service Providers and all job groups. The majority of these barriers are viewed by the OPS as within their control. Several fundamental factors need to be addressed in improving service quality such as workload and, therefore, work processes.

Strategies to close the Design Gap

Realign policies and management systems.

Key policies and management systems must be aligned to reinforce service quality. Customer service priorities must be clarified. Accountability must be inherent in the job and should promote calculated risk-taking. The OPS needs to declare war on 'red-tape'. It must strive to eliminate waste in the form of unneeded checks and balances in order to achieve a better equilibrium between controllership and service.

Performance evaluation must be related to service quality at all levels. Compensation must be related to service quality performance. Recognition must be provided for service quality leadership and performance. Classification must recognize customer service functions. Delays in filling positions must be reduced. Financial management policies must be structured to provide incentives for savings by individual services and ministries.

Set priorities and redeploy resources.

Resource deployment is a controllable issue. Many of the proposed strategies will not cost money. The OPS suggests that the government sets its service priorities and then aligns its policies and resources with these priorities. Providing better service value for tax dollars is central to the success of Ontario.

The Opportunity Matrix

One tool for assessing resource deployment is the Opportunity Matrix. Customer views of the relative importance and performance of service quality are plotted to reveal sources of opportunity. High value (upper right quadrant) exists where the customer's expectations about the most important services are matched or exceeded by the customer's perceptions of performance. Services located in this quadrant may represent opportunities for development, and to learn more about those service characteristics that the Public values.

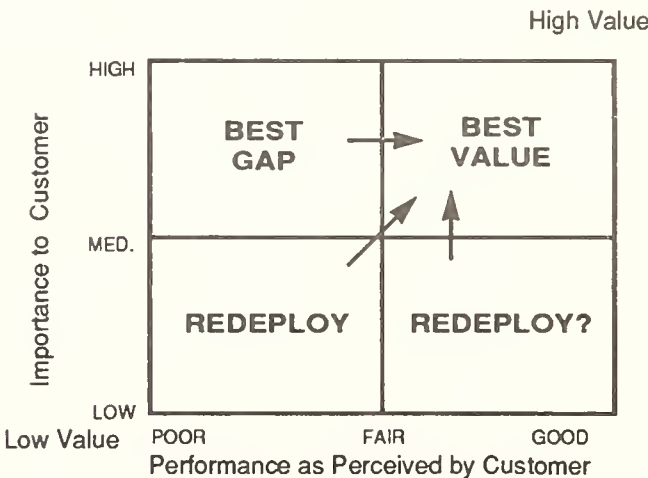
A Service Quality Gap exists when the customer

rates the importance of the service high and the performance low (upper left quadrant). This situation represents opportunities for improvement where they are most needed. If there is a Service Quality Gap in the view of the customer, then it is essential to understand the major contributing factors.

If customers rate the importance of specific services low and performance high, then this may represent a redeployment opportunity (lower right quadrant). In this case, the OPS may be doing a very good job on something that either is not important or that the Public does not appreciate as important. The latter may represent social marketing challenges. Further, it may be that the service is mandated and cannot be redeployed or that the service is of critical importance to the business but not to the customer.

If customers rate both importance and performance as low (lower left quadrant), then this represents opportunities to reevaluate these services for redeployment. If the service is not important to customers and the organization is doing a poor job, the question must be "Why are we spending scarce resources on this service?"

While it was not the purpose of this study to evaluate specific services, the Opportunity Matrix provides a useful tool for the OPS to evaluate its specific businesses and services.



Build partnerships and integrate service delivery structures to improve service and reduce waste. The OPS should decentralize integrated services. The integration of services could begin with co-location. This would improve communication and understanding between service providers and reduce the time and distances involved for customers of related services. The OPS should also redeploy resources to increase front-line staff. To deal with high workloads, service units must reduce volume and service levels by setting priorities. Services must increase staff to approved complement levels by filling vacancies faster and by staffing for peak workloads.

Redesign service processes and cut red tape. Design improvements have been identified by customers primarily in terms of improved access. These include:

- extended hours of operation
- the introduction of automated delivery systems
- the development of one-stop centres
- the use of clear language
- improved telephone services
- improved complaint resolution

Reduce workloads by accelerating approvals and cutting red tape through process redesign. Service quality improvement is a process of eliminating root causes of service quality problems such as those identified by the OPS, namely high workloads, internal bureaucracy, and slow approval processes.

One way to begin to address the issue of workload requires analyzing each service process, identifying tasks that add value for the customer and those that do not. The next step involves taking non-value added work out of the service process. It means reducing the number of approvals required, cutting “red-tape”, getting rid of “dumb rules” and eliminating re-work and any form of waste.

In a particular service unit, it may not be worthwhile to improve an existing process. The service unit may have to completely redesign its whole way of doing business. Each service unit

must start the analysis with the definition of customers' requirements and with the best opportunities for improvement.

THERE IS VARIABILITY IN SERVICE DELIVERY ACROSS THE PROVINCE

The Delivery Gap is the difference between how service systems are designed to operate and how services are actually delivered. Service delivery is seen as inconsistent by both the Public and the OPS. The Public agrees that “Regulations and policies are not applied consistently” and “People in cities get better treatment than do people in towns and rural areas”. More than one third disagrees that “the Ontario Government treats people equally regardless of gender, age, race, culture or disability”.

Services are not subject to the same controls as in a manufacturing process. Unlike manufacturing, services are simultaneously produced and consumed at the point of delivery and therefore quality cannot be assured in advance of service delivery. Services are more difficult to measure and to set specific standards for than manufacturing because of their intangibility. Unlike manufacturing, the Public plays a direct part in the service process and can significantly affect the process.

For these reasons, it is very difficult to separate service processes and outputs in the customer's perception. For example, customers may perceive service quality as poor if they have to wait a long time even though the information they eventually receive is accurate.

Some variation in service is to be expected and is, in fact, desirable to allow for adaptation to individual and local circumstances. However, a wide degree of variability is cause for concern and may be due to common causes which are within the control of the government to address. The Delivery Gap focuses on factors related to the motivation and management of people within the OPS.

Despite advances in automation and other technological innovations, one of the most impor-

tant challenges for the OPS is management innovation. An important ingredient in the success of service quality improvement efforts is the change management process itself.

The OPS identified that lack of knowledge, associated with lack of training and experience, were among the top obstacles to service quality improvement. Many are concerned that workers who have the most direct customer contact are the least well-trained and least experienced. Many also expressed concerns about the lack of investment in high quality skills training.

Strategies to close the Delivery Gap

Employee satisfaction is critical to customer satisfaction. The OPS must invest in its people because customer relations mirror employee relations. OPS survey respondents identified that “low morale” was one of the biggest barriers to improved service and one of the best opportunities for improvement. It is almost impossible to achieve high customer satisfaction with employees who have low morale. It is essential to improve employee relations because people will unwittingly treat their customers as they perceive they have been treated by management. Efforts to improve customer service must begin by getting at employee issues.

The OPS is motivated for change. The OPS wants to do a good job but believes “the system” is preventing it. Pride of work and ownership of a job well-done are critical. Increased pride in the quality of work and increased support and recognition from management will lead to improved employee morale. OPS management must pay more attention to the front line. The OPS needs to develop a cooperative, non-confrontational and participative work environment.

Expect cynicism. The current high level of desire for change will erode if management does not live up to staff expectations of change and does not follow through with needed support. Morale and pride are not issues that can

be addressed directly. While morale and pride have major impacts on service quality and productivity, they are the result of other factors which must be addressed first. There is a need for a visible demonstration of management commitment by addressing issues of system-wide concern. Management must lead the change process.

Build the customer into performance evaluations. The OPS has already begun to include customer service expectations in Deputy Ministers’ performance agreements. This should be cascaded throughout the organization by building the customer directly into the performance evaluation process.

Recognize and reward service quality. The elements of job satisfaction include:

- job title
- autonomy—decision-making—empowerment
- variety
- consistency of support from management
- performance evaluation
- recognition
- base compensation and incentives

Make it worthwhile to do it right. The OPS identified lack of financial incentives as a major obstacle to service quality improvement. Compensation should reflect the importance of customer service, recognizing that customer service positions are often the least well-paid. Compensation should include the ability to satisfy the customer. While OPS workshop participants agreed that compensation was important, they also identified that incentives mean more than money and that more money does not necessarily mean higher job satisfaction.

People should be recognized and rewarded for identifying problems and collaboratively developing lasting solutions. Incentives include developing people through methods such as career paths, job enrichment, and developmental assignments. There are many opportunities to provide both formal and informal recognition. While a number of Ministries have begun to provide Customer Service Improve-

ment awards, many members of the OPS feel that there is little recognition or reward for a job well done.

Remove disincentives to improved performance. A number of factors were identified as disincentives to improved service performance. Present accountability policies and systems reinforce risk and responsibility avoidance. Compensation is not aligned with corporate priorities. Corrective action is not taken with respect to poor performance.

Support and empower employees. “Slow approval processes”, “lack of strong support from management” and “lack of authority to make decisions” were among the top-ranked obstacles and opportunities for service quality improvement. While the concept of empowering employees has received recognition from many organizations as an essential ingredient for improving customer service, it is probably the most difficult to implement. Employees know how to make improvements but management has to provide a structure and process for gaining their involvement and eliciting their suggestions.

Empowerment begins with increasing employee involvement in service improvement processes and empowering staff to resolve customers’ needs at first point of contact. This means building the authority into the job—not just delegating it. Support calculated risk-taking. Coach people in risk evaluation and emphasize on-the-job training rather than control.

Expect resistance to change but not at the frontline. Ensure management’s commitment to service is visible by having senior managers experience direct contact with the Public. Service improvement also requires an information support system for workers to be able to make informed decisions. Improvement demands more than good intentions. Managers and employees need a specific improvement methodology and problem-solving tools.

Train! Train! Train! The OPS Strategy Workshops identified a number of training needs. The most consistently identified front-line training needs include:

- technical/computer
- legislation interpretation
- referral/other ministries services
- courtesy service
- English as a second language

The most consistently identified management and professional training needs include:

- human relations
- self-directing work teams
- team work/participation
- technical competence

Both groups require training in quality improvement methodologies and tools. Personnel should also be cross-trained (that is, trained to perform different functions within a service unit) for greater flexibility. The OPS should also accredit all training in order to recognize the importance of training and to provide incentives for people to continue to be trained throughout their lives.

REALISTIC SERVICE CAPABILITIES ARE NOT ACCURATELY COMMUNICATED TO THE PUBLIC

The Communication Gap is the difference between service as actually delivered and communications to customers about service capabilities. Public expectations are shaped by political messages and news releases, word-of-mouth, past experiences with government and their experiences with private sector services.

Are customers being promised a type or level of service quality that cannot be delivered? Ontario Government communications to the customer about its service capabilities have a significant effect on customer expectations. Unmet expectations will result in dissatisfaction and erode trust in government.

Communications to the Public can also address any special efforts that are being made to improve service quality, and that may not be apparent to the customer. In this way, external communications can affect expectations as well as perceptions of service quality. It is better to under-promise and over-deliver than to create unrealistic expectations and then fail to meet them.

The government does not accurately communicate its service capacities to the Public. A number of Public information sources are “passive” i.e., the Public must find out about them and contact the information service. At present, Ontario Government services do not generally communicate service capabilities actively, although some have begun to “promise” response times. Advertising is generally limited to Public Service messages concerning such matters as health, labour, the environment, and the promotion of tourism and the hospitality industry.

In the absence of effective management of Public communications, the Public is left to form its own expectations about Ontario Government service capabilities. The Public is largely unaware of many information sources about government.

Strategies to close the Communications Gap

The OPS must better manage Public communications about service quality. Each service unit must determine what is possible, communicate a realistic service message and then deliver the service as promised. This will require close coordination between communications, operations and human resources functions to ensure that service promises can be kept.

By identifying performance standards, an organization is forced to focus on the customer. Further, by making service promises and then keeping them, the OPS may be successful in re-orienting the customer’s expectations and

increasing perceptions of service quality.

Services could offer customers choices; for example, quicker routine, more rudimentary service or slower, more customized service. The OPS can also influence customer expectations by setting target service levels and service packages. Through communications, it may be possible to change customer contact patterns, such as time of day and choice of method (for example, in person or by phone). This demands such alternatives be accessible and effective. In these ways, employee workloads can be redistributed to achieve greater balance and thereby better service.

The OPS can also help to better prepare customers for the service by explaining at the outset the process and requirements expected of the customer. This information must be readily accessible by phone and mail. It will help to reduce demand for office visits.

7. IMPLICATIONS OF STRATEGIES FOR GOVERNMENT-WIDE CHANGE MANAGEMENT

The majority of the proposed strategies are within the control of OPS direct service businesses. A number are government-wide. On a government-wide basis, Management Board, together with other central agencies, must lead the change-management process. There is great need for leadership, coordination, consistency, and effective communication. Value for tax dollars must be the imperative; it must be reflected in senior decision-making, and it will be tested daily.

The strategies provide a framework for self-assessment by each service unit. Realistically, service quality improvement is an on-going, iterative process. Significant improvement will not happen overnight—it’s a long-term undertaking. For significant gains to occur, the government must make a commitment to:

- create and communicate an Ontario Public Service Vision that values customer service

- lead the change-management process
- align government-wide policies, resources and management systems to support the achievement of the OPS Vision and service quality improvement priorities
- provide a central resource on service quality improvement

The role of central agencies should be to “pave the way and stay out of the way”. Paving the way will require real innovation and creativity in redefining corporate requirements for performance and accountability. While there is a central leadership role, the definition of service quality must take place at the point of contact with customers.

8. SERVICE LEVEL CHANGES WILL BE EVOLUTIONARY

Policy alignment, resource deployment and service design issues are critical to service quality improvement. A great many of the proposed strategies are within the control of the direct service businesses. Services within these businesses are at different stages of development.

Some significant gains have been made; however, changes taking place at the service level will be evolutionary and will represent a series of incremental gains over time.

The strategies are corporate in the sense that they apply to all ministries. However, service quality is not something that can be determined at the corporate level in an organization with services as diverse as the Ontario Government. Standards should be specific to each program to allow flexibility in setting priorities and targeting. There should not be, for example, government-wide standards for response times. Care must be taken to avoid perpetuating a service system which is “rule-driven, not customer-driven”.

9. CONCLUSIONS

To date, service design has been largely based on organizational needs, not customer needs. Service quality demands that customer needs drive the process.

A first priority in improving service should be to meet existing customer expectations, which the research has shown is not unreasonable. Ministries and programs should set realistic service-quality targets regarding timeliness, access, reliability and other measures based on the expectations that their individual customers hold. Progressively higher standards can then be set until customer expectations are fully met. It is not sufficient, however, just to set targets; these standards must also be communicated to customers.

Success at the direct service level will require senior management leadership and support. Management commitment to the new order of customer-driven service priorities will constantly be tested; it is easy to revert to old ways.

Senior management must not only set the pace, they must demonstrate a sustained visible, and personal commitment to service quality to others within the OPS.

In so doing, they make it possible for all staff to become champions of quality service. As a customer focus is integrated into both the formal structure of the OPS and into its everyday ethic, the achievement of best value for tax dollars will become a reality.

Part I

Service Quality Gaps and Strategies to Close Them

THE RESEARCH STRATEGY IN BRIEF

1.1 Purpose of the Assignment

This research project was conceived and managed by the Customer Service Task Force. The purpose of the research was to:

- identify broadly held issues and measures of importance in the provision of customer service, access and satisfaction
- gather information on how satisfied are both external and internal customers with direct government services in general, what they expect of service and what they perceive is preventing or assisting the provincial government in meeting customer expectations
- analyze the data to understand current performance
- • propose broad strategies to assist ministries to improve customer service in the Ontario Public Service (OPS), including measurement and evaluation
- assist in creating the strategic capability to compare the divergence of service provider - customer views; the similarity of internal OPS realities comparing front-line, supervisory, senior management; and potentially, the views of Ontarians over time

1.2 Scope

The groups targeted for consultation included:

- the Ontario public
- front-line providers of service to the Ontario public
- OPS management (supervisory and senior)

- government employees who are internal customers of other ministries' services

In terms of external services, the research assessed global opinions of the Public in relation to those services provided directly by the OPS and excluded those of third parties such as hospitals and schools. As well, the research mandate was to remain at a global level and was not to evaluate any specific service. Four direct service businesses were identified by the Public and OPS participants during the survey development process: Registration, Information, Financial Assistance and Enforcement / Justice. These businesses encompass most of the direct service activities of the Ontario Government. The research focused on the importance of services and the processes of delivery but did not study the issue of entitlement to service or the number or nature of services offered.

1.3 Method

The research used a building block approach to identify Ontario Government direct services, to describe elements of service, to collect survey data and to formulate strategies. This report describes results collected from the following sequence of research activities: Public and OPS developmental focus groups, a private sector Think Tank session, two large sample questionnaires (one survey to 10,000 members of the Public and one survey to 8,000 members of the OPS fielded in July, 1991) and a series of seven strategy formulation workshops involving all levels of the OPS. All research tools were created with broadly based participation of the OPS

and the Public. A series of seven **developmental focus groups** were conducted across the Province with members of the Public and the OPS. Specific survey questions were developed, tested, and revised in the focus groups.

The objective of the private sector **Think Tank** was to provide the OPS with advice and examples of 'best practices' that can be used in planning strategies for improvement in public service. The Think Tank consisted of two parts: an afternoon session, in which a discussion document was developed by a working group of private sector customer service experts and members of the OPS, and an evening session where the document was presented to chief executives and deputy ministers for their review, revision and endorsement. Appendix A contains a list of participating organizations and individuals.

As part of the research project, **two parallel surveys** were conducted in the summer of 1991. Details on the development process for the two surveys appear in Appendix B. The surveys were designed to provide the Task Force with the following information:

- whether the Public and the OPS share similar or different perspectives on service quality provided by the Government of Ontario
- the barriers and opportunities in the provision of high quality customer service
- a framework for developing strategies that enhance service to the public

The Public sample of 10,000 was drawn on a random basis from computer files of residential telephone numbers in Ontario. To ensure Francophone representation, the French language version of the questionnaire was mailed to an additional 500 francophones selected from a mailing list maintained by the province's Office of Francophone Affairs. Public surveys included a letter of introduction from Premier Bob Rae. In all, 2,258 questionnaires were received (a Public return rate of 21 percent).

8,000 OPS employees were selected at random from the government's payroll list. OPS surveys included a letter of introduction signed by Glenna Carr, Chair of the Customer Service Task Force

and Fred Upshaw, President of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU). In all, 1,999 questionnaires were received (an OPS return rate of 25 percent).

A series of seven OPS Strategy Workshops reviewed the findings from the survey research and developed strategies to improve customer service. The key purposes of the OPS Strategy Workshops were to:

- help interpret findings and implications of the survey results
- develop and evaluate strategies to improve service quality that would have the support of all levels of the OPS
- test several service quality improvement tools
- involve the people who are doing the work, at every organizational level, in developing strategies for improvement

SERVICE QUALITY

2.1 Introduction

Customers assess service quality by comparing the service they receive with the service they expect they should receive. Service quality therefore is measured on two dimensions: customers' expectations of the service they **should receive** from the OPS and their perceptions of the service they **received** from the OPS.

Customer expectations are dynamic and will change over time. Expectations are based on the level of service that customers have become used to, but advances in service quality by other service providers, including the private sector, will affect the Public's expectations of OPS service delivery as well. The quality that customers perceive in a service is a function of the size and direction of the difference or gap between expected service and perceived service.

In this report, the research measures the two dimensions of service quality in several ways. Customers' expectations of the quality of service they should receive are measured in relation to:

- the importance they assign to service elements, for example, how important are protecting confidentiality, getting fast service, knowledgeable staff?
- measures of acceptable service levels, for example, how fast should a customer be able to get service?

Customers' perceptions of actual OPS service performance are measured in relation to:

- value received for tax dollars
- the overall quality of service provided by the Ontario Government compared to other service providers

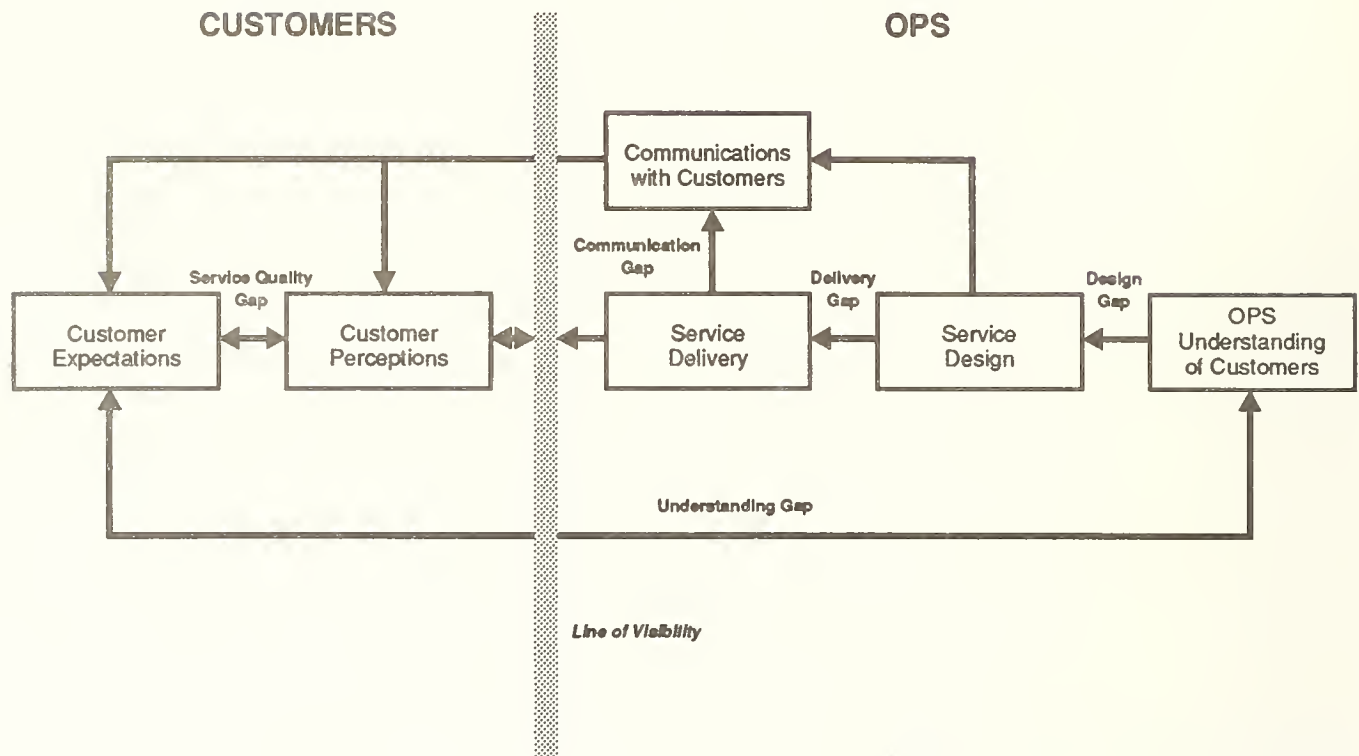
- overall opinions about Ontario Government service
- specific experiences with government's direct services based on a range of service quality elements
- opinions about service improvement options in their community

An important factor that will affect customers' perceptions of Ontario Government service quality is the regulatory role performed by government. Government must exercise responsibilities in the interests of the Public that may conflict with individual interests. For example, a license to operate a vehicle may be refused for a variety of reasons. The individual may be dissatisfied and perceive service as poor but the Public interest is served.

A customer is anyone who receives the output of someone else's work. The OPS serves both external and internal customers. External customers are the Ontario Public. Internal customers are members of the OPS who receive services or outputs from other members of the OPS. Throughout the document, direct comments from the Public, the OPS and the private sector Think Tank participants are shown in *italics*. These comments best communicate the feelings and concerns of those most affected by Ontario Government service quality.

All members of the OPS serve the Public either directly or indirectly. The Ontario Government's direct service businesses are provided by ministries and their respective service units. There are two types of service units. External Service Units' primary customers are the Public and Internal Service Units' primary customers are other members of the OPS. Internal Services include, for example, Human Resources, Informa-

A SERVICE QUALITY MODEL



*Adapted from Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985)

tion Technology and Financial Services. Service Providers are individuals within either External Service or Internal Service units.

All work is a process. A service process begins with inputs from customers, adds value through each step and ends with the desired output. Seen in this way, other members of service units are also customers — they are “the next persons in the service process”. In each case, the service provider is both a supplier of services to other unit members and a customer (receiver of outputs) of other members. When describing the views of the OPS, the research refers only to the service providers’ primary customer: external or internal.

2.2 Service Quality Model

The Service Quality Model* consists of five major gaps. The model represents the essential components of the service experience from the customer’s perspective and from the OPS perspective. The customer’s reality is depicted by the two left-hand boxes, consisting of Service Expectations and Service Perceptions. The OPS’s view is summarized by the four boxes to the right: Understanding of Customers, Service Design, Service Delivery and Communication to Customers.

* The model used in this research has been adapted from the work of Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V., and Berry, L. “A Conceptual Model of Service Quality and its Implications for Future Research.” Journal of Marketing, Vol. 49 (Fall 1985), 41-50.

The two views are separated by a 'line of visibility'. The customer sees little of the 'behind the scenes' processes and policies that affect the quality of service. Customers can readily describe what is important to them and their satisfaction with service but they cannot be expected to know how to "fix the system" behind the line of visibility. Nonetheless, customer observations help identify the most important opportunities and highest priorities for service improvement.

THE SERVICE QUALITY GAP is the difference between customers' expectations of service quality and their perceptions of OPS performance.

What do customers expect from the Ontario Government? How do customers rate the government's performance? If expectations exceed performance (the research indicates they often do), it becomes necessary to explore the contributing factors. These are organized in four remaining gaps:

- OPS Understanding Gap
- Design Gap
- Delivery Gap
- Communication Gap

THE OPS UNDERSTANDING GAP is the difference between Public views of service quality and OPS views about the quality of its own services.

Does the OPS understand what is important to its external and internal customers? Does the OPS understand how the Public perceives the quality of service? The research first compares Public and OPS views. The research then looks within the OPS to compare the views of internal customers and service providers. OPS understanding of customer views affects the entire alignment of the service system.

THE DESIGN GAP is the difference between the OPS's understanding of customer views of service quality and the design of OPS service systems.

The Design Gap exists when the OPS does not design its service systems to meet customers'

reasonable expectations. The accuracy of OPS understanding of customer views is a critical consideration in the design of service systems. The design of service systems includes three major aspects:

- the alignment of policies and management systems
- resource deployment
- service design

THE DELIVERY GAP is the difference between how service systems are designed to operate and how services are actually delivered.

Even when services are designed to meet customers' reasonable expectations, differences in service quality may exist due to variability in employee performance. Services are not subject to the same controls as in a manufacturing process. Unlike manufacturing, services are simultaneously produced and consumed at the point of delivery and therefore quality cannot be assured in advance of delivery. Services are more difficult to measure and to set specific standards for than manufacturing because of intangibility. Unlike manufacturing, the Public is directly part of the service process and can significantly affect it. For these reasons, it is very difficult to separate service processes and outputs in the customer's perceptions of quality. For example, customers requesting information will perceive service quality as poor if they have to contact the government three or four times or have to wait a long time even though the information they finally receive is accurate.

Some variation in service is to be expected and is, in fact, desirable to allow for adaptation to individual and local circumstances and to provide personalized service. However, a wide degree of variability is cause for concern and may be due to common causes that are within the control of the government to resolve. The Delivery Gap focuses on factors related to the motivation and management of the OPS.

THE COMMUNICATION GAP is the difference between service as actually delivered and communications to customers about service capabilities.

Is the customer being promised a type or level of service quality that cannot be delivered? Ontario Government communications to customers about its service availability and capabilities have a significant effect on customer expectations. Unmet expectations result in dissatisfaction and erode trust in government. Communications to the Public can also address special efforts that are being made to improve service quality, and that may not be apparent to the customer. In this way, external communications can affect both customer's expectations and their perceptions of service quality.

- having a high likelihood of acceptance because the OPS is ready for change
- reflecting the practices of a growing number of ministries

2.3 Strategies to Close the Gaps

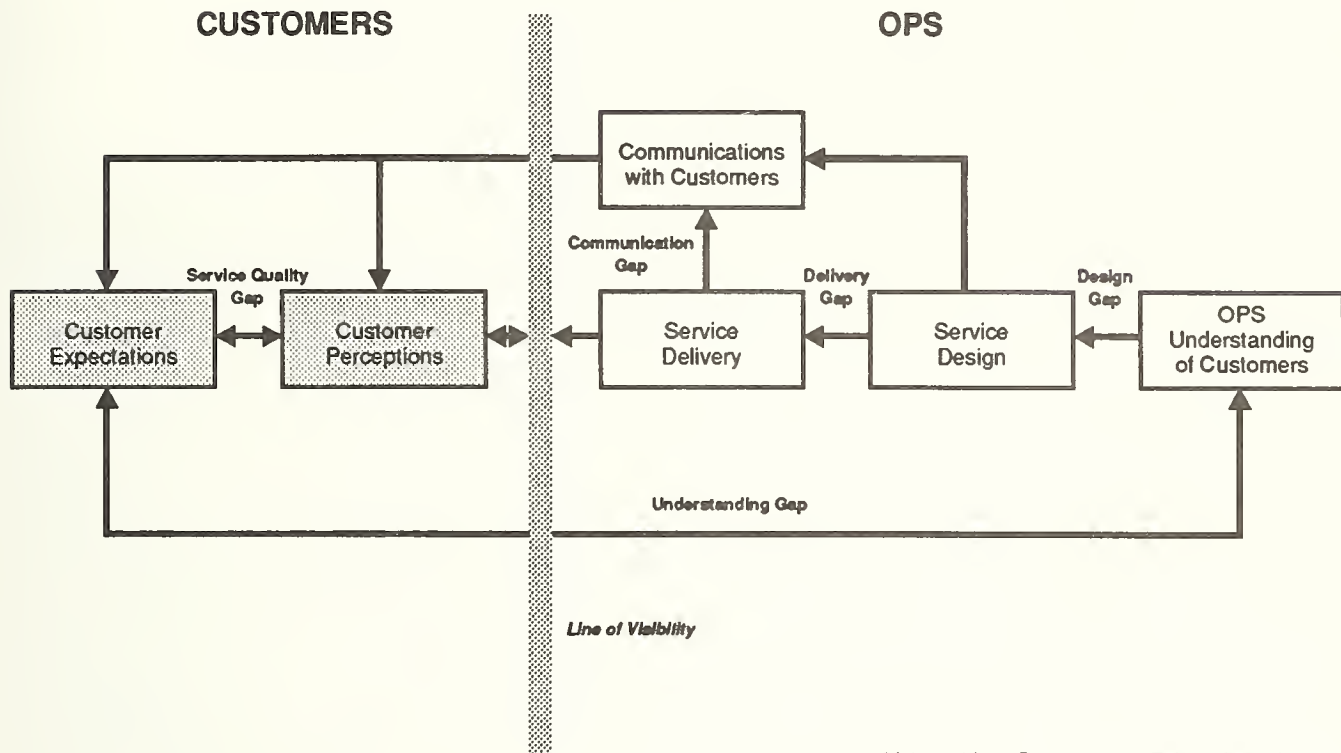
Strategies are defined as **“broad activities that are likely to be successful in making the OPS a more client-focused organization”**. Strategies were drawn from OPS survey responses, the Think Tank and the OPS Strategy Workshops. Participants developed and then evaluated each strategy using the following criteria:

- pay-off in customer service improvement
- resources required
- feasibility
- time required to achieve results

Members of the OPS used the research results and the Service Quality Model to develop strategies that would close the identified gaps. Each of the strategies has been assessed by the OPS Strategy Workshop participants as:

- likely to have a high impact on improving customer service
- requiring few resources, in fact, many should save money
- actionable, in many cases, without delay
- within the control of ministries, for the most part

SERVICE QUALITY GAP



*Adapted from Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985)

THE SERVICE QUALITY GAP is the difference between customers' expectations of service quality and their perceptions of OPS performance.

3.1 Introduction

Customer expectations are shaped by: word-of-mouth communications, customers' perceived needs, past experience, communications from the Ontario Government and experiences with other service providers. Public perceptions of OPS performance are based on their experiences at the point of contact with the OPS. Customers' perceptions are their reality. This chapter describes the major research findings related to the Service Quality Gap.

There is a 'line of visibility' that exists between the customer and the service provider. The customer sees little of the 'behind the scenes' processes and policies that affect the quality of service. Customers can be reasonably expected to

describe what is important to them and their satisfaction with service performance. While customers may be in a position to offer some general observations, it is not reasonable to expect them to tell you how to fix the 'system' behind the line of visibility. Nonetheless, customer observations will provide direction in identifying the most important opportunities and highest priorities for service improvement.

SERVICE QUALITY GAP: Summary of Research Findings

THE PUBLIC IS NOT GETTING THE QUALITY OF SERVICE IT EXPECTS

Overall, the Ontario Public does not perceive that it is getting good value for tax dollars. Only one in five Public respondents indicated they are getting good value for tax dollars from Ontario Government service in general.

The Public is able to differentiate among the three levels of government in terms of the services they provide.

The Ontario Public ranked the service of the Ontario Government higher than that of the federal government, but below Canada Post, municipal governments, and three private sector organizations (a department store, bank or trust company, and a supermarket).

The Public is more satisfied with the government's four major direct service businesses than with the performance of the Ontario Government overall.

The Public rates service performance based on a recent experience even higher than the four direct service businesses.

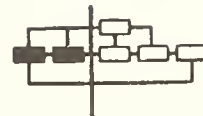
The Public sees timeliness, accessibility, reliability, responsiveness and cost as fundamentals of quality service.

Three factors that most strongly affect ratings of service performance are the number of contacts, the time required to complete the service and cost.

Customers are "reasonable" in their expectations and they can be satisfied.

Those using services for business reasons are the least satisfied.

The Public's perception of Ontario Government services varies with age, occupation, income and urban-rural residency.



3.2 Service Quality Research Findings

This section briefly summarizes the research data that describes the Service Quality Gap. A detailed description of each finding is contained in Part II, Chapter 1, The Public View of Service Quality.

OVERALL, THE ONTARIO PUBLIC DOES NOT PERCEIVE THAT IT IS GETTING GOOD VALUE FOR TAX DOLLARS

Voice of the Public

"Give us some results and value for our tax money. We can't afford you!"

Only one in five Public respondents indicated they are getting good value for tax dollars from Ontario Government services in general. Public perception of value for tax dollars is an evaluation of the quality of service received and the cost of the service even though no specific price may be associated with that service. The Public also believe that improving service quality will save money, OPS staff are not over-worked, service is getting more complex, service is inconsistent and that service is not getting better.

The Public is able to differentiate among the three levels of government in terms of the services they provide — at least in relation to those services tested in the survey. More than 70% of the population chose the correct level of government for each of seven services except birth certificates, which almost 60% answered correctly. This information is important, as it verifies that survey respondents are, by and large, describing their experience with the Ontario Government, not some other level of government.

The Ontario Public ranked the service of the Ontario Government higher than that of the federal government, but below Canada Post, municipal governments, and three

private sector organizations (a department store, bank or trust company, and a supermarket). This is an important finding that may be associated with stereotyping when compared with the significantly higher evaluations of specific service experiences as discussed on the following pages. The notion of stereotyping may apply to all governments but this was not evaluated in this study. It may be that when taken as a whole, the Public may always have negative perceptions of government despite positive experiences with specific services.

THE PUBLIC IS MORE SATISFIED WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S FOUR MAJOR DIRECT SERVICE BUSINESSES THAN WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT OVERALL

Public ratings of Ontario Government services were substantially higher when evaluating their overall satisfaction with a direct service business. The four direct service businesses are: Registration; Information; Financial Assistance; and, Enforcement / Justice. Public ratings of satisfaction with these direct service businesses range from 53 out of 100 for Enforcement / Justice to 62 for Financial Assistance while the Public's rating of the government's overall service quality is just 45 out of 100. However, "value for tax dollars" was the lowest ranked element in overall opinions of government services and was also the lowest ranked on the basis of a specific service experience.

The Public rates service performance based on a recent experience even higher than the four direct service businesses. The Public rated OPS performance based on a recent specific service experience in relation to seventeen service quality elements, for example, getting a birth certificate, registering a company name or seeking landlord-tenant information. When the Public rates a specific service experience on the service elements, the average rating goes up from 45 (on overall quality of Ontario Government services) to 62 out of 100.

Figure 3.1

Service Value for Tax dollars can be considered a function of:

Timeliness, Accessibility, Reliability, Responsiveness

Cost

These are large and significant jumps in Public perceptions of government performance.

This suggests that while there may be stereotyping of Ontario Government services at an overall government level, the Public is able to provide more unbiased ratings in relation to specific service experiences and is capable of being "reasonable" in its assessments of service quality. The notion of reasonableness is discussed later in this section. (See Part II, Chapter 1 for a description of the profile of the users of each service and their levels of satisfaction.)

It is important to note that while ratings increased as evaluations moved away from overall ratings of the Ontario Government to a specific service experience, this may change when customers focus on evaluating specific services. However, even at the level of specific service experiences, large gaps exist between Public expectations and perceptions of Ontario Government service quality. In every instance, with one notable exception, the Public perceives there is a gap between the importance of the element and OPS performance.

OPS performance exceeded a high customer importance rating on only one element - "my confidentiality was protected". This element may be unique because accountability and standards of performance exist throughout the Ontario Government. It is very important to understand this 'match' since similar standards and consequences generally do not exist in relation to the other service quality elements. The implications for service standards are discussed in Chapter 5 - DESIGN GAP.

An analysis of overall Public satisfaction with a direct service and the specific service experience also reveals that respondents tended to

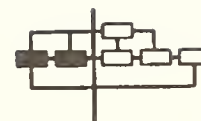
choose a typical service experience rather than solely those experiences that left them angry and frustrated. (See Part II, Chapter 1 for a more detailed explanation.)

THE PUBLIC SEES TIMELINESS, ACCESSIBILITY, RELIABILITY, RESPONSIVENESS AND COST AS FUNDAMENTALS OF QUALITY SERVICE

Fast service, number of contacts and cost are the factors that are most strongly associated with customer satisfaction. Seventeen service quality elements were rated in the survey. All elements were seen as important to OPS customers. The research did not reveal any particular grouping or clustering among the various elements. However, for purposes of convenience and memorability, the elements have been grouped into five areas. The number of elements has been expanded based on survey and OPS workshop comments. This hypothesis is suggested by the data and was tested in the OPS workshops.

The specific determinants of customer satisfaction will vary depending on the specific service and should be evaluated by each OPS service. In addition to the generic factors described above, customers of specific services may have additional requirements that are unique to that service.

The fundamental qualities in determining Public satisfaction and perceptions of value for tax dollars are:



Timeliness

- the time required to complete the service

Accessibility

- the number of contacts, locations*, or people involved in completing the service transaction
- hours of operation
- understandable language both spoken/ written*
- convenience and design of service location
- choice of service delivery methods such as telephone, mail, in person or by computer*

Reliability

- perceptions of the knowledge and competence of staff
- getting direct answers
- consistent information from one employee to another
- up-to-date accurate information
- the protection of confidentiality

Responsiveness

- clear and easy communication with OPS staff

- courtesy and helpfulness
- understanding of customer needs
- OPS staff take pride in their work

Cost

- cost of service entitlement**
- cost of service transaction

Voice of the Public

"This new service is supposed to take 2 days. Sometimes it is a month."

"When trying to obtain information, I usually end up speaking to 2 or 3 people before I can get an answer."

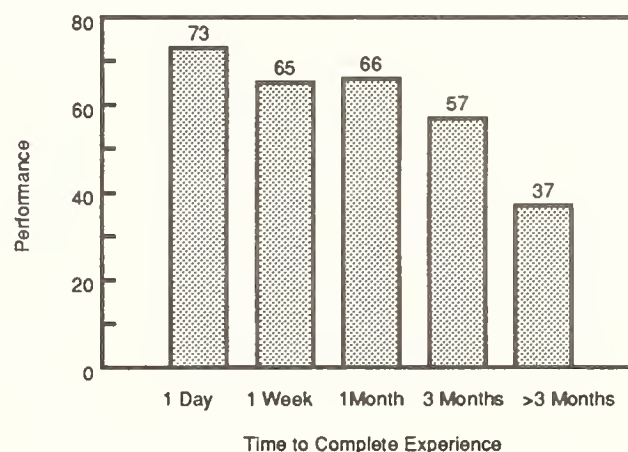
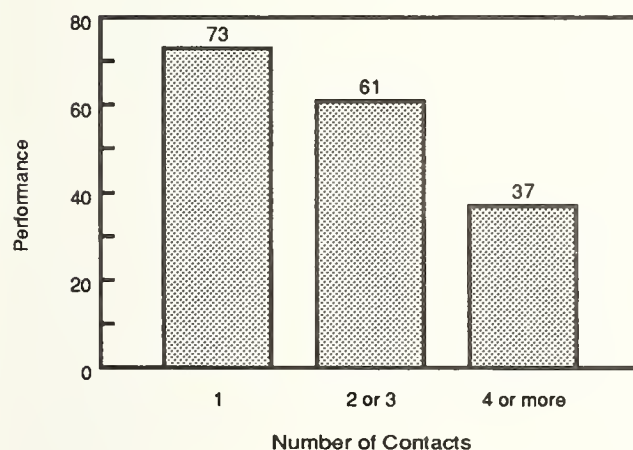
The number of contacts and the time required to complete the service are the two factors that profoundly affect Public assessment of performance. These two factors are the strongest determinants of performance ratings for a specific service experience as shown in Figure 3.1 below. **When service was completed in less than one day or with only one contact, evaluations of OPS performance**

3

Figure 3.2

Number of Contacts & Duration of Service Experience

Ontario Public, 1991



0- Extremely poor performance 100- extremely good performance

* Elements added based on OPS workshops and survey comments are shown with an asterisk. All others are directly from the survey.

** Not within the scope of this research

were significantly higher and compared very favourably with private sector service providers such as banks and supermarkets. Those who wait for long periods of time or who require many contacts to get service, tend to rate performance very low.

Customers are “reasonable” in their expectations and they can be satisfied. The Public was asked to describe its expectations of acceptable service in relation to routine services by mail, phone or in person. Objective measures of performance were established for specific service tasks in order to determine average expectations and threshold levels of expectation such as the length of time customers are prepared to wait in a line. This permits comparisons between Public and OPS views to identify gaps and establish the “reasonableness” of Public expectations. On each measure, the OPS set a stricter standard than the Public. The Public response can therefore be considered “reasonable”.

The reason for using Government services affects public perceptions of service quality. People who use government services for **personal reasons** rate performance higher, on average, than those who use them for **business reasons**. For Registration services, people who perceived the service as a **legal requirement** rated performance higher than others. For Information, Financial Assistance, and Enforcement / Justice services, this did not occur; in fact those who perceived the service as a legal requirement rated performance slightly lower than those who did not. About 6 percent of respondents are uncertain as to the legal status of the service they chose to rate.

Emergency situations account for 10 percent of the total service experiences described by respondents. In the areas of Registration and Information, emergency situations received low performance scores. In Financial Assistance and Enforcement / Justice, emergency situations received performance scores very similar to non-emergencies.

Service delivery that involved **face-to-face** contact — visits to government offices and visits by government representatives to customers — re-

ceive relatively high performance scores. On-line access to government service scores just as high. **Mail and phone** services are similar in that both score significantly below personal visits and on-line services.

The Public’s perception of Ontario Government services varies with age, occupation, income, and urban-rural residency. Older and retired people, those with lower incomes, those living in the North, and Francophones tend to be more satisfied with the quality of Ontario Government services. Conversely, business managers and owners, office and factory workers, tradespeople, residents of rural areas (other than the North) and those with higher incomes are least satisfied.

3.3 Service Improvement Priorities as seen by Customers

Based on the survey, a number of service improvements have been identified by customers. The priorities can be organized into three major areas:

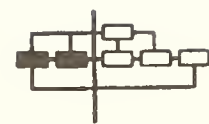
- Improve timeliness
- Improve access / decrease number of contacts
- Reduce costs

IMPROVE TIMELINESS

Voice of the OPS

“We sometimes take a long time to get it wrong.”

Much could be gained in customer satisfaction if the OPS were to focus on improving the timeliness of service response. This would help to counter stereotypes and it would provide measurable focus by concentrating efforts on reducing response times. Public perceptions regarding access, cost, reliability and responsiveness would also improve.



The OPS needs to ensure that they understand the customer's time requirements and determine the most appropriate response time in relation to each specific service. Timeliness is also closely related to the number of contacts a customer must make. Both time and number of contacts may be affected by the complexity of the customer's situation, ineligibility or the customer's willingness to accept the government's decision. Timeliness standards should be established in relation to routine service requests by method of access, e.g., phone, mail and office visits.

Business processes must be redesigned to eliminate un-needed steps, streamlined and/or automated. Processes must be improved before being automated.

IMPROVE ACCESS

Based on Public survey responses, a number of design changes have been identified. The following section describes design changes that could significantly improve service quality, primarily in relation to access. Further design improvements are described in Chapter 5 - DESIGN GAP.

The number of contacts to complete the service is of particular importance in creating service satisfaction. Other access factors include, for example, hours of operation, telephone response, language, machine access, office location, and integration of services.

Both the Public and the OPS were asked a number of questions regarding possible improvements that involved changes in the design of the system itself (as opposed to process improvements in the delivery of existing services). Each of these designs can be considered access improvements. While some implementation costs may be recoverable, this has not been evaluated.

Extend office hours. 73% of the Public want extended office hours and 55% of the Public would accept either later opening or closing another day. Among those OPS serving the Public,

60% are opposed to extending office hours although there is more support among managers and those who have internal customers. The costs of extending hours can be reduced by such means as compressed work weeks and flexible hours.

Introduce automated machines. 35% of the Public want automated machines as a means of delivering service. Support is lowest among those over the age of 65 and highest among those 18-24 (50%). A further 24% said they were unsure but not negative. Compared to private sector experience, these results can be considered as a very high level of support. For example, while 35% of the Public indicated willingness to use something like an "Automatic Banking Machine" (ABM), this increased to 40% when asked if they would use on-line access and the number saying no to such machines went down from 42% to 29%.

The Public was initially very slow to react to the introduction of automated banking machines by banks and trust companies. The private sector has had to use incentives to develop an economic level of usage. However, Public acceptance has now developed to the point where government may take advantage of a much higher level of public awareness and acceptance of use. Based on private sector experience, the introduction of such machines should also reduce costs of routine, high volume transactions.

ABM's have not resulted in a reduced number of tellers in financial institutions, but has changed the nature of work. The focus has shifted to providing "face to face" service for more **non-routine** service requests. It was also suggested that on-line access could be made available in Public buildings, eg., libraries. Although some concerns may be raised about confidentiality, protecting confidentiality is what the Ontario Government does best in the Public's view. This would provide the government with an opportunity to build service based on its strengths. As well, an important consideration in Public uptake of new technology will be the ease of use. While technology has been seen by some within the OPS

as the solution — it is only a tool. In this time of constraint, the affordability of such technology is being questioned particularly as a number of services have increased fees to cover cost of technology and then not delivered promised service improvements.

Develop One-Stop centres. 50% of the Public want a one-stop centre that combines both Ontario Government and municipal services. Almost 50% of the OPS support the concept of one-stop centres for Ontario Government services but the level of OPS support drops considerably if both municipal and provincial services are combined. The utility of one-stop service centres needs to be investigated further on a service-by-service basis with the testing of specific service configurations. The concept of one-stop shopping is not a recommendation for ‘all services in one place’. Instead, one-stop centres should be well-thought means of integrating services for the convenience of the particular customer group irrespective of the number of ministries or levels of government involved.

Use clear language. 42% of the Public believes “language in forms and documents is hard to understand”. Related opinions of service performance include “staff communicate clearly and are easy to talk to” and “staff are direct and give straight answers”, both of which show large performance gaps. Concerns were often expressed in the survey that English language skills were deficient in many OPS staff dealing with the Public.

Voice of the Public

“Half the time, you can’t understand the person answering the phone.”

Use English and French only. At least 52% of the Public do not want services to be provided in languages other than English or French. Less than 25% of the Public support the availability of other language translation. OPS Internal Service Providers are more likely than External Service Providers to support other language translation of all kinds. OPS managers (both senior and middle) are more likely to support other language translation than other staff.

Improve telephone services. There were a great many complaints about poor telephone access. Those who use telephone or mail are among the least satisfied of all Public respondents. The telephone is the most democratic form of access but it is not nearly accessible enough. Improvements to customer telephone service include increasing affordable access such as 1-800 numbers, improving communication about these numbers and on how to access services, establishing hotlines for customer inquiry that should be staffed by the most knowledgeable and experienced people and providing access to integrated information data networks. If customers can resolve their service needs by telephone, this would help to reduce line-ups at offices and give a strong message to the Public of improved service quality. Effective telephone service demands that accurate information be readily available.

Voice of the Public

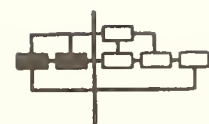
“Waste of tax money, when you phone any government department, you die of old age waiting for an answer.”

“In an instance that we encountered, a phone call would have speeded up service; then we could have delivered the information and money in person to speed up the process. The wait on hold to get through to the majority of government services is tremendous and very annoying.”

“I tried to use an 800 number to obtain information. You should be able to reach that number. After three days of trying, I finally gave it up as hopeless. They can’t possibly be busy every time you call.”

“Employees who answer the phone seldom have the required info OR do not have up-to-date info to provide to the citizen inquiring. Consequently, extra time is expended verifying and cross-checking facts.”

Given the irrelevance or neutrality of the location for central telephone inquiry support services, consideration should be given to increasing the capacity of a central inquiry facility. This



would certainly have major implications in terms of staffing and the acquisition of technology required to support such a centralized function. It also demands an up-to-date information base with access to needed information in order to be able to provide a more direct referral to a specific Branch rather than just a global referral to a ministry. An important undertaking will be the linking of existing databases.

Use office visits for non-routine services. Office visits are better suited to deal with non-routine requests. Other forms of access could be used for routine service requests. The OPS should evaluate their service delivery systems to enable customers to access services with routine requests without requiring an office visit. This would free office staff to provide more individualized responses to non-routine service requests. The human resource implications of this shift are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 - DELIVERY GAP.

Improve complaint resolution. Complaints should be analyzed to contribute to service improvement efforts. Few customers actually complain. Most dissatisfied customers just go away angry. Dissatisfied customers are also more likely than satisfied customers to tell others of their negative experience. Where there is an alternative, dissatisfied customers move to other service providers. If a service can quickly and successfully resolve complaints, customers tend to have a better view of the service.

Voice of the Public

"Complaints should be followed up to ensure the problem has been resolved to the client's satisfaction."

Voice of the OPS

"We should provide easy customer access to complaint resolution. We have to make complaint resolution processes accessible to customers and tie these processes to our understanding of customer requirements. We must aim for resolution at first point of contact but we need support from management to do this."

In the private sector, the complaining customer is increasingly seen as a valuable source of improvement ideas and is to be sought out rather than avoided. In the public sector, because there are rarely alternative services within the same jurisdiction, it is incumbent upon the OPS to use these complaints to improve services. Complaint tracking and analysis systems can provide useful information for service improvement efforts. Methods for determining the seriousness of complaints help to identify priorities. There needs to be clear accountability for resolution. Service units also need to make complaint systems readily accessible and make it easy to complain. **The aim should be to resolve complaints at the first point of contact. This means the authority to resolve the complaint must be inherent within the jobs closest to the customer.** Successful complaint resolution also requires an effective information infrastructure and continuity in complaint handling for follow-through.

REDUCE COSTS

Voice of the Public

"The public service should not be increased by adding employees. It is already very costly. The quality of employees, and better management, could improve services without adding to the cost."

"Of course better service is always desirable but not if it involves additional costs. I suggest you do not use this survey to justify additional expenditures. By all means streamline, cut out waste, work efficiently. The public is fed up with wasted time, money, effort, etc."

The Public believes very strongly that improved service should not cost more money. Instead, 70% said improved service should save money. It is a major Public concern that the Ontario Government should provide "better value for tax dollars". This is further reinforced by the fact that 37% of survey respondents commented on either the lack of value for tax dollars, govern-

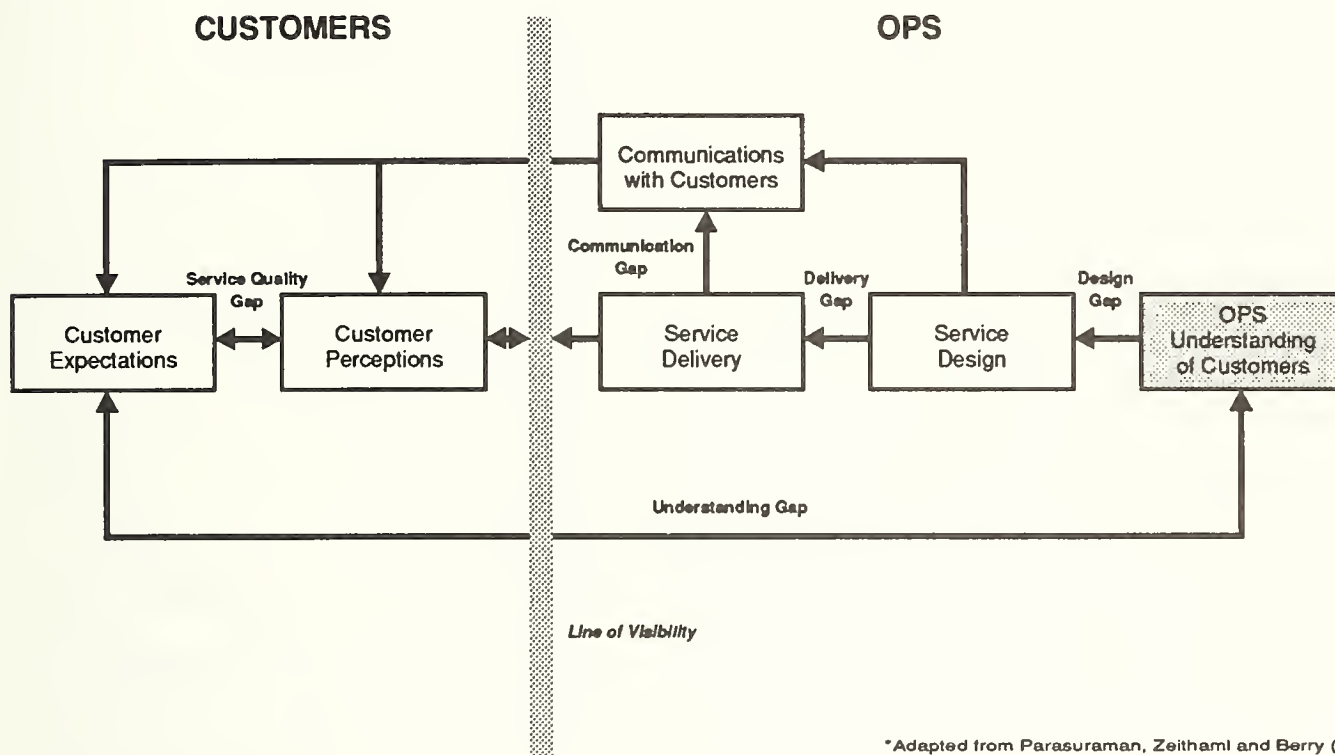
ment inefficiency and waste, or the size of government and too many programs. However, it was beyond the scope of this research to determine the number or type of services that should be offered.

SERVICE QUALITY GAP: CONCLUSIONS

The research shows that a significant gap exists between the quality of service customers expect they should receive and their perceptions of the service they receive. The Service Quality Gap is the most critical gap. Since a Service Quality Gap exists, then the contributing factors need to be identified and explored. The contributing factors are organized by the Service Quality Model into four remaining gaps:

- OPS Understanding Gap - Chapter 4
- Design Gap - Chapter 5
- Delivery Gap - Chapter 6
- Communication Gap - Chapter 7

THE OPS UNDERSTANDING GAP



*Adapted from Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985)

THE OPS UNDERSTANDING GAP is the difference between Public views of service quality and OPS views about the quality of its own services.

4.1 Introduction

Does the OPS understand what is important to its customers (both externally and internally) and does the OPS understand how the Public perceives the quality of OPS services? The research looks first at a comparison of the Public and OPS views, and second, at a comparison of OPS internal customers and Internal Service Provider views.

A comparison of Public and OPS views reveals whether the OPS understands customers' expectations and perceptions of service quality. Differences in OPS understanding of the importance of service quality and performance as

viewed by customers will affect the alignment of the entire service system. Gaps in OPS understanding of service quality affect the design and delivery of services as well as communications regarding OPS capacity. The nature of the gap also helps to direct improvement strategies. Public and OPS views on importance and OPS performance on service elements were compared on the following:

Expectations of the quality of service the Public should receive were measured in relation to:

- the importance they assign to service elements, for example, how important are protecting confidentiality, getting fast service, knowledgeable staff?

- measures of acceptable service levels, for example, how fast should a customer be able to get service?

Perceptions of OPS service performance are measured in relation to:

- value received for tax dollars
- the overall quality of service provided by the

Ontario Government compared to other service providers

- overall opinions about Ontario Government service
- specific experiences with direct services based on a range of service quality elements;
- opinions about service delivery improvement options in their community

OPS UNDERSTANDING GAP: Summary of Research Findings

THE OPS DOES NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND HOW THE PUBLIC VIEWS ITS PERFORMANCE

External Customers: The Public

The OPS accurately understands what is important to Public customers.

OPS External Service Providers do not need to be convinced of the importance of customer service.

The OPS accurately understands how the Public perceives government service as a whole but does not accurately understand how the Public perceives specific service experiences.

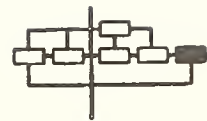
Internal Customers: The OPS

OPS internal customers and internal service providers share an understanding of the importance of 'Internal' services. The importance of the services varies considerably. Highest ranked are Information Technology, Human Resources and Policy Formulation. Lowest ranked was Accommodation.

At a government-wide level, there is a shared perception within the OPS of internal service performance but not at the individual or work group level.

There are substantial gaps between the Importance of Internal services and their performance.

There are consistent demographic differences within the OPS on ratings of the importance and performance of internal services and service quality elements.



4.2 OPS Understanding - Survey Research Findings

External Customers

THE OPS ACCURATELY UNDERSTANDS WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO PUBLIC CUSTOMERS

Both the Public and OPS agree that “services are not good value for tax dollars” and “improving service quality should save money”. While the Public and the OPS both agree with the following statements, the OPS holds these opinions more strongly than does the Public:

- services are getting more complicated
- regulations and policies are not applied consistently
- the language in forms and documents is hard to understand
- staff are not properly trained and qualified

It should be noted that these are opinions regarding the government in general, and may involve some degree of stereotyping shared by both the Public and the OPS. However, there are some significant differences of opinion between the Public and the OPS. In particular, the Public tends to disagree with the OPS that:

- the OPS treats people equally
- OPS staff are overworked and cannot give customers individual attention

The latter statement reinforces the notion that customers believe money can be saved if service quality is improved because the Public may believe that OPS staff are working below their capacity. As well, this also reinforces the view that the Public does not see behind the “line of visibility” or perhaps does not understand the impact of the design of service systems on workloads and customer service.

The OPS places more importance on service quality elements than the Public. The OPS understands what is important to the Public. In fact, the OPS attaches higher importance to the seventeen service elements by an average of 10 points. The OPS also uses, on average, much more stringent criteria for defining acceptable service than does the Public.

The Public’s service expectations are more reasonable than the OPS’s. Public expectations are generally not as high as the OPS thinks they are, and are generally less than what the OPS considers to be reasonable.

OPS External Service Providers do not need to be convinced of the importance of customer service. There is little need for programs designed to increase the awareness of the importance of customer service for External Service Providers, since they already place higher importance than the Public on all service quality elements and have more stringent criteria for acceptable service.

Table 4.1 Overall Quality of Service Ontario Public 1991		
Service	Public How good is the service? (0-100)	OPS How does Public rate your service? (0-100)
Your Municipal Government	55	57
Ontario Government*	45	51
Federal Government	36	36

* statistically significant difference
0 is extremely poor, 100 is extremely good

THE OPS ACCURATELY UNDERSTANDS HOW THE PUBLIC PERCEIVES OVERALL GOVERNMENT SERVICE BUT DOES NOT ACCURATELY UNDERSTAND HOW THE PUBLIC PERCEIVES INDIVIDUAL OR WORK GROUP PERFORMANCE

The OPS is quite accurate in its ability to anticipate how members of the Public will rate overall service quality. The OPS understands both the overall Public perception of the quality of government service and the Public ranking by level of government. While there is a shared negative perception by both the Public and the OPS of the quality of Ontario Government service, individual members of the OPS consistently over-rate their own performance and that of their workgroup by a very large margin. When compared to the Public, individual members of the OPS rated their own performance at an average of 84 while the Public's average rating for a specific service experience was only 56. Members of the OPS do not understand how customers perceive them at an individual or workgroup level. A significant personal subjectivity factor is likely in effect concerning individuals' perceptions of their own performance and that of their workgroup. A lack of critical feedback and evaluation mechanisms may also account for the large performance rating discrepancy. (See Part II, Chapter 2 for more information regarding OPS views.)

Internal Customers: the OPS

For the purposes of this research, the OPS is divided into two groups: those whose primary customer is the Public and those whose primary customer is internal. In addition to questions about overall service quality and opinions of Ontario Government services, each OPS group was asked, in a parallel way, to assess the importance of service quality elements and the performance of internal services.

Think Tank

"The goal is for the whole organization to satisfy the external customer. We must recognize that

everything that happens in the organization impacts customer service."

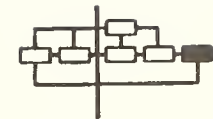
"Service quality is the result of a chain of events. There is a backward chain from the external customer through the organization. We must understand the requirements of our customers to ensure linkages throughout the organization. Internal customer service is important because everyone has a customer - from the most senior to the most junior - starting with the most senior. High quality service requires understanding and cooperation across different departments. In the 'quality chain', everyone is both a customer and a supplier. Internally the 'next person in the process is your customer'. You are their supplier. You are also someone else's customer because they supply you with their work."

Internal customers are those who receive services from the following staff groups:

- Information Technology
- Human Resources
- Policy
- Financial
- Communication
- Accommodation
- Legal
- Purchasing

OPS INTERNAL CUSTOMERS AND INTERNAL SERVICE PROVIDERS SHARE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE IMPORTANCE OF 'INTERNAL' SERVICES AND RANK THE IMPORTANCE OF A NUMBER OF INTERNAL SERVICES AS RELATIVELY LOW

Generally, both OPS External and Internal Service Providers have similar opinions of the importance of Internal Services, e.g., Human Resources or Accommodation. Overall, there is a much wider variation in the importance rankings of a number of Internal Services such that Finance, Purchasing, Legal and Accommodation services are seen as quite low in relative importance.



AT A GOVERNMENT-WIDE LEVEL, THERE IS A SHARED PERCEPTION WITHIN THE OPS OF INTERNAL SERVICE PERFORMANCE BUT NOT AT THE INDIVIDUAL OR WORK GROUP LEVEL

The perception of Internal Service performance is shared at the government-wide level. Internal customers rate the overall quality of the Internal Services that they receive at 52, which matches other OPS ratings of Internal Service performance at 51.

However, Internal Service Providers rate the quality of the service they personally provide at 82 and the performance of their work group at 77. In fact, the average assessment of work group performance was identical (77) when comparing External Service Providers and Internal Service Providers. The over-rating of personal and work group performance shows the same subjectivity factor as seen with OPS External Service Providers.

The following conclusions can be made:

- Internal Service Providers consistently over-rate their individual and work group performance and yet are dissatisfied with the quality of service they receive from other Internal Service providers

- Internal Service Providers see complexity as less of an issue — perhaps because they are the specialists
- Internal Service Providers also lack direct feedback from customers on service performance

THERE ARE SUBSTANTIAL GAPS BETWEEN THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNAL SERVICES AND THEIR PERFORMANCE

As shown in Table 4.2 below, there are major gaps between importance and performance on three services in particular: Information Technology, Human Resources and Policy.

While the gap size may be relatively small for Financial, Purchasing and Legal Services, this is generally due to the much lower ratings of importance attached to these services. Services can be seen to be ranked in importance in relation to their impact on the ability of the OPS to deliver services to the Public. Information, Human Resources, Policy and Communication Services have the greatest direct impact on the Public. OPS Accommodation is rated lowest in terms of relative importance.

Table 4.2		
INTERNAL SERVICES		
IMPORTANCE AND PERFORMANCE		
All OPS, 1991		
SERVICE	IMPORTANCE (0-100)	PERFORMANCE (0-100)
Information Technology*	71	53
Human Resources*	70	48
Policy formulation & program design*	65	47
Communication*	63	52
Financial*	59	50
Purchasing*	56	49
Legal Services	53	57
Accommodation*	40	54
AVERAGE	60	51
* statistically significant difference		
0 is extremely poor, 100 is extremely good		

There are consistent demographic differences within the OPS on ratings of the importance and performance of internal services and service quality elements. Five major work groups were identified within the OPS: Senior Managers, Middle Managers, Supervisors, Support staff and Front Line. Senior and middle managers give all Internal Services (with the exception of Legal services) the lowest ratings of all work groups. This may be because senior and middle management are the primary users of Legal services. The only service where the majority of the OPS perceive that importance is exceeded by performance is Accommodation. This is due to its very low rating of importance. Senior managers are not satisfied with Accommodation but this gap is the smallest of any importance-performance gap for that group. These ratings are consistent with the much lower importance attached by the OPS to the quality elements associated with accommodation for the Public (office design and location).

4.3 OPS Understanding - Workshop Findings

REASONS FOR DISSATISFACTION WITH INTERNAL SERVICES

The reasons for these survey results were explored in the Strategy Formulation Work-

shops. The four services with both the highest importance scores and greatest apparent direct impact on Public customers are discussed on the following pages. In relation to each service, OPS comments from either the survey or workshops are shown. Beneath each set of comments are a number of factors and examples that have also been distilled from the workshops and the surveys.

Information Technology Services

The ability of the OPS to respond to the Public very much depends on the information infrastructure and ease of internal access. Information Technology services were rated highest in importance by all work groups. Improvements are needed in timeliness, responsiveness, access and communication.

Voice of the OPS

"I want one contact with one person and get the service I require. Instead, you call up the support group and they say that you should talk to the technical group who say talk to the key user? If you do not have one or don't know what or who a key user is, then use the maintenance contract. If you do not have a maintenance contract, you have to go back to square one."

"They deliver it (the equipment), after that, it is up to you. If it doesn't work, it is your problem."

Table 4.3 Information Technology Services	
FACTORS	EXAMPLES (Survey / Strategy Formulation Workshops)
Timeliness	- delays in repairs - downtime - use of mainframes decreases response time
Responsiveness	- lack of support from information technology services - lack of process design and redesign support - systems not user-friendly - lack of customization to meet specific needs - can't add-on new applications or developments - under-utilization of existing technology
Access	too many contacts to complete service
Communication	overselling capabilities resulting in unmet expectation

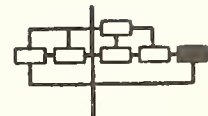


Table 4.4	
Human Resources Services	
FACTORS	EXAMPLES (Survey / Strategy Formulation Workshops)
Timeliness	• slow response to enquiries • work waits for processing because of vacation, leaves of absence, delays in replacement (applies to all services) • lack of support from information technology services
Access	• inaccessible - no response to enquiries
Reliability	• inaccurate - not up-to-date • lack of HR tracking system for assignments
Responsiveness	• central agencies make uncoordinated and redundant requests for information • information not clear or generally available • lack of leadership and direction • too much control - little or no service • lack of central coordination and support • gap between what's available and what's required • tracking but not training • inadequate / inconsistent orientation to Government, Ministry and job • not matched to needs of worker • not focused • more costly because of decentralization

Human Resources Services

Human Resource services were rated second highest in importance. However, performance was rated second lowest. Human Resource services has the largest gap between importance and performance. Improvements are needed in timeliness, access, reliability and responsiveness.

Voice of the OPS

"Their (Human Resource) standards have to do with perfect policy which is perfectly unimplementable. Human Resource managers are not there to assist the line manager achieve something within a period of time."

"Central agencies keep making requests for information. The requests are not coordinated, directed or focused and then they come back and ask for a different twist on the same information which creates a great amount of work."

"Because of the length of time to fill positions, too many positions are being filled with non-advertised secondments to avoid delays associated with the competition process. The biggest impediment to filling the position is the Surplus List."

"I've had no response to my enquiries about benefits - its been over three months (in another case, 2 years)".

Policy Formulation & Program Design Services

Although rated third in importance, Policy Formulation and Program Design services show the second largest gap. Policy services have a significant impact on direct service delivery. Improvement is most needed in relation to timeliness, responsiveness and communication with internal customers.

Table 4.5 Program Policy Services	
FACTORS	EXAMPLES (Survey / Strategy Formulation Workshops)
Timeliness	• delays in finalization of policy, then rush to implement it • policies lack currency
Responsiveness	• lack of support - instead it's adversarial which leads to taking positions for negotiation • not implementable
Communication	• lack of plain language • lack of consultation

Voice of the OPS

"Policies are not kept up to date to reflect changes in the environment."

"They create perfect policy, not practical policy."

"Lack of consultation with the front line in policy development."

"No feedback on bottom up policy or it takes a very long time."

"Policies need to be more flexible for today's operating environment."

Communication Services

While Communication services were ranked fourth highest of the eight internal services included in the survey, the third largest gap occurred. The major area of concern was lack of responsiveness.

Voice of the OPS

"We lack a model for marketing services."

"We lack resources to market properly."

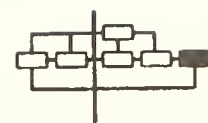
"Government should market its services, not itself."

"Need better communication between, and within, Branches and Ministries. Lack of understanding of structure, and function, of different ministries and branches is common."

4.4 Strategies to Improve OPS Understanding of Customer Expectations and Perceptions

Get close to customers. The first step in service quality improvement is to have a clear understanding of who your customers are, what is important to them and how well you are doing. Customers must define their requirements. This can only be determined by talking directly to customers and measuring their satisfaction. Staff need timely feedback from customers on their performance in order to continue to learn ways to improve. The importance of

Table 4.6 Communication Services	
FACTORS	EXAMPLES (Survey / Strategy Formulation Workshops)
Responsiveness	• Unable to respond to inquiries
Inter-ministerial	• Need to have better communication between ministries - don't know enough about each other
Corporate directions	• Need clear communication of corporate directions and priorities - seem only concerned with press releases
Information	
Consistency	• No consistent corporate image or message



the impact of Internal Services on Public service quality must be recognized. Customer Service Agreements can be developed between Internal Customers and Internal Services to improve service. Once customer needs are understood, service units must maintain their understanding and stay close to their customers. This section describes strategies developed by the OPS to close the Understanding Gap.

Voice of the Public

"In an information age, all kinds of information begins to have value. This includes info from the public, not just to the public. There should be some kind of public consultation service where people can give feedback (not just complaints) routinely, and this info is passed on to the appropriate department for collation and possible action. Seems to be many access points now but no formal procedures to ensure (customer's) message is received or considered."

Voice of the OPS

"Continuous feedback from customers on service performance is crucial. We must maintain constant contact with our customers. In the private sector, if they lose contact with their customers, they lose customers. In government, we lose their support."

IDENTIFY EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL CUSTOMERS

The OPS should identify and establish an accurate profile of their customers (both external and internal). What is the type of service? Who are their customers? What are their reasons for using the service. What is the nature of the service transaction? Are these customers shared with other OPS services? What are the shared uses/services? In what locations?

Service providers must understand the nature of the service transaction. This should include, for example:

- type of service
- reason for use
 - routine / non-routine
 - mandatory / voluntary
 - business / personal
- frequency of use
- average number of contacts
- method of contact
- cost per transaction

GET CUSTOMERS TO DEFINE THEIR REQUIREMENTS

Think Tank

"The strategic direction for service is provided by determining what is most important to customers. Customers must define their requirements. This cannot be determined from inside the organization."

Determine what is important to customers.

The OPS must identify the needs as seen by their specific customers. There are a variety of ways to seek direct feedback from customers including, for example:

- user meetings
- user forums
- interviews
- comment cards / suggestion boxes
- focus groups
- surveys

Customers are only interested in their problems. A "line of visibility" exists between customers and service providers. Customers rarely see "behind the scenes" in service processes. Customers place more emphasis on the service process as they experience it and the result. How quickly can they get what they want and at what cost? Fortunately, the research shows the Public is generally reasonable. How satisfied are customers with timeliness, number of contacts, accessibility, reliability, responsiveness and cost? Are there other important characteristics of quality for customers given the specific service?

DEVELOP DIRECT MEASURES OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Voice of the OPS

"What gets measured gets done but what gets rewarded gets done well!"

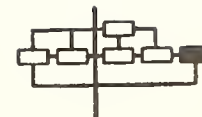
Think Tank

"We must be very careful in our choice of measurements. Measurements must generate the right employee behaviour. Compensation systems must be aligned with measurement systems. It will do no good to ask people to cooperate to improve service quality if we don't compensate them for it."

Measure what's important to customers. Because subjectivity is a major factor in service provider self-evaluations, direct feedback must be sought from customers. Each service needs to develop an accurate understanding of customer perceptions of its performance. Measurement systems of the customers' expectations and perceptions need to be established. To begin with, WHAT is measured is more important than HOW it is measured. The choice of what to measure is strategic. Measurement focuses the organization and focus on the wrong area can take the organization in the wrong direction.

The following list of measures was developed in the OPS Strategy Formulation Workshops:
Table 4.7

QUALITY FUNDAMENTAL	EXAMPLE MEASURES
Timeliness	• elapsed time to completion of service • data is current • size and duration of backlog • comparison to standards that are known by the public
Accessibility	• number of contacts / number of locations required to complete services • how well distributed relative to population and job to be done • hours of operation • variety of access modes • number of locations • convenience (distance to office) • office design (e.g., barrier free) • telephone access
Reliability	• adherence to policy • adherence to professional / technical standards • level of training • up to date knowledge • consistency of advice (not necessarily "sameness" given decentralization and adaptation to local circumstances) • error rate • impact of actions taken as a result of info/advice given • number of appeals upheld • audit of quality reports • accuracy of product information • number of amendments to customer documents
Responsiveness	• needed services received • special effort by staff • completed referrals / follow-through • clear communication



On-going measurement and feedback will enable services to correct their course by identifying gaps or differences between customer expectations and perceptions of service quality. Measures should be established for customer satisfaction with both the process and the output. Measurement of customer satisfaction must be a priority.

GET CUSTOMERS TO DEFINE STANDARDS OF QUALITY

Customers must define quality standards. The establishment of measures, the setting of standards, ensuring the system is capable of meeting the standards, and communicating the standards to the Public and within each service unit will be essential to the success of OPS service quality improvement efforts. Customers' standards of service must be specific to each program and its customers rather than centrally imposed. Standards that are centrally imposed become 'rules' developed by those who are farthest away from the customer. Rules become bureaucratic and inflexible. Standards must be dynamic and must change as customer needs change. Each OPS service will need to determine the satisfaction thresholds for their customers and set realistic service standards.

Set progressively higher standards. The overall goal is to provide better value for tax dollars. As an initial step, set achievable service quality targets. The strategy is to set progressively higher standards as targets until customer expectations are met. The objective is to provide service that meets customers' needs. This means the OPS must aim to meet customers' expectations which, as the research shows, are not unreasonable. The OPS is presently not meeting these expectations.

Although it was not part of the mandate of this study to assess specific services and their conformance to standards, useful information was gathered that will facilitate the development of service standards in relation to certain elements of routine service requests.

The OPS and the Public were asked to indicate what they considered to be an acceptable level of service relative to a number of objective measures. In all cases, the average for the OPS was more demanding than the average for the Public by as much as 5% to 48%. This information may be useful in setting specific performance standards, but the standards should not be based on the average. For example, by answering the phone in three rings, the OPS could satisfy almost 90% of their customers. Standards can be expected to vary significantly on the basis of whether the service is routine or non-routine.

To determine standards for performance measures, service units should:

- determine what the customer wants
- determine what the service system can realistically deliver
- set a standard that strikes a balance between the two, considering the proportion of the Public that would prefer a better standard (you will not be able to please all the people all the time)
- communicate the standard to the Public (this will influence their expectation, and may make it possible to please more of the Public more of the time)
- continue to strive to improve performance and raise standards to meet customer expectations

PROVIDE TIMELY FEEDBACK ON PERFORMANCE TO STAFF

Think Tank

"Staff need timely feedback on customer satisfaction. This can take many forms but getting feedback directly from clients soon after their service experience will help us to improve. Continuous customer feedback is essential to drive change and it must be action-oriented. Staff need a more immediate feedback loop and the organization has to close the loop with the customer and define the next level of improvement. This information must be shared with employees."

The nature of performance feedback and timing is also important. Performance feedback must be constructive and goal-oriented not problem-oriented since people inherently want to do a good job. Timely feedback is essential to learning. The absence of direct feedback from customers contributes to OPS misunderstanding of customer perceptions of service performance.

customer service. What kinds of standards do we need in terms of turn-around time, reporting information, content frequency, etc.?"

INCREASE THE AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNAL SERVICES

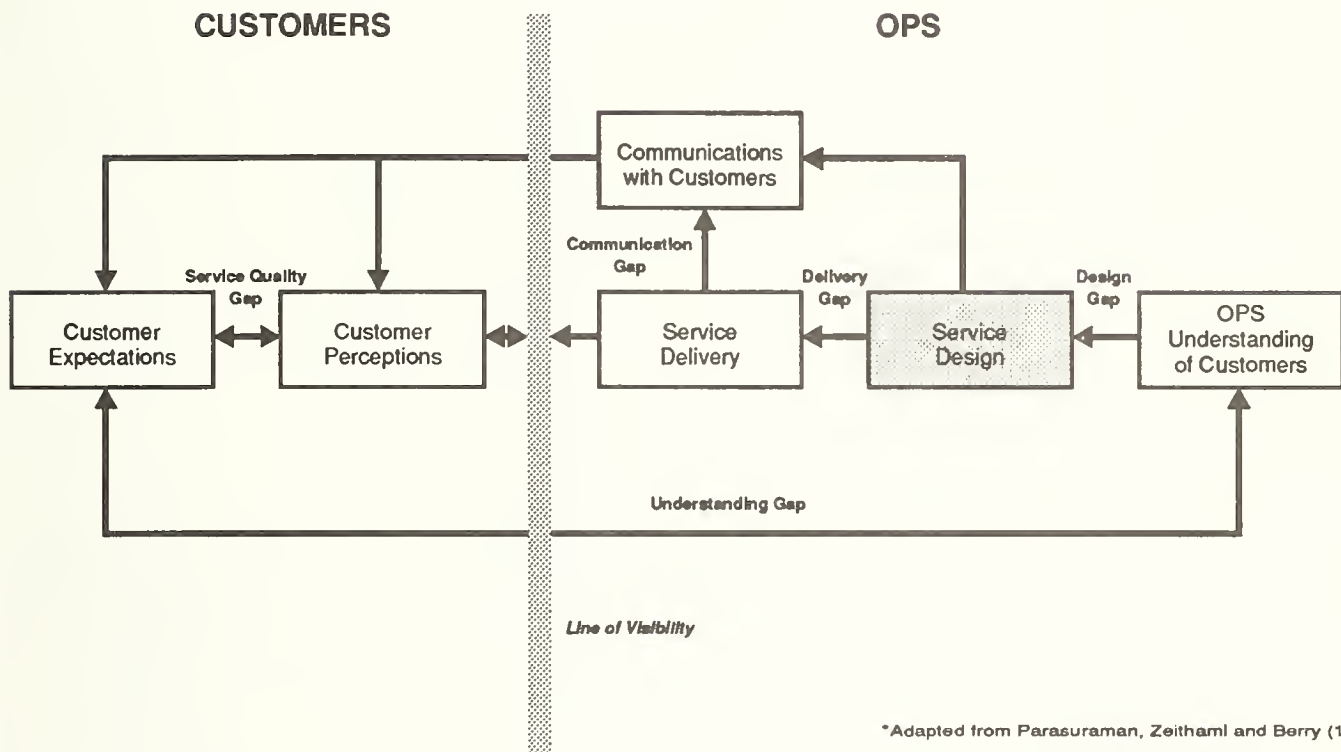
Internal Services tend to be seen as less important by all OPS. While OPS External Service Providers do not need to be convinced of the importance of external customer service, the research suggests there is such a need regarding Internal Service. The OPS should heighten the awareness of the importance of Internal Services and their impact on Public service quality.

Use customer service agreements for internal services. A number of service units have begun to establish customer service agreements with Internal Customers. Customer service agreements help to define a mutual understanding between the Internal Customer and Internal Services providers of the specific service process. A process path should be developed that describes the reciprocal roles and responsibilities, expected times, and information requirements. Each of these serve as performance standards by which to judge the success of the process. This also helps to establish mutual understanding of the demands and constraints that affect Internal Customers and service units. The objective is to become a partner with your customers to understand and serve their needs.

Voice of the OPS

"Customer service agreements are the only way to create a clear understanding between service providers and management and we are doing the same thing with our clients - it helps develop a reciprocal understanding. Develop a critical path to define understanding of time frames and elements required. They need more dialogue with customers and what they define as good

THE DESIGN GAP



*Adapted from Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985)

The DESIGN GAP is the difference between the OPS's understanding of their customers and the design of OPS service systems.

5.1 Introduction

The accuracy of OPS understanding of both what is important to the customer and customer perceptions of OPS performance is a critical consideration in the design of service systems. The design of service systems includes three major aspects that are addressed in this chapter:

- the alignment of policies and management systems
- resource deployment
- service design

Behind the 'line of visibility', the OPS are in a

much better position to identify what is needed to improve service than customers. Policy, deployment and design issues have a fundamental impact on an organization's capacity to deliver services. Therefore, policy, deployment and design issues must be addressed before delivery issues as they are beyond the control of the individual employee and in some cases beyond the control of the service unit, i.e., they are government-wide.

The data in this and the following sections are drawn from the surveys but rely heavily on the Strategy Formulation workshops conducted with the OPS for the interpretation of the data and

the subsequent development of strategies. For this reason, frequent use is made of the participants' comments that describe in their own words

both the problems and their solutions. Where appropriate these comments have been summarized as components of the overall strategy.

DESIGN GAP: Summary of Research Findings

SERVICES ARE NOT DESIGNED TO MEET CUSTOMER REQUIREMENTS

Policies and management systems are not aligned to serve customers at both the service level and government-wide. These include:

- Customer service
- Accountability
- Classification
- Recognition and Reward
- Compensation
- Surplus list
- Financial Management (Consolidated Revenue Fund)

Resources are not deployed as well as they could be to focus on providing the best value for tax dollars.

Design improvements have been identified by customers primarily in terms of improved access. These include:

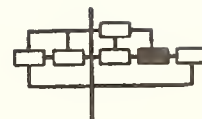
- extended hours of operation
- the introduction of automated machines
- the development of one stop centres
- the use of understandable language
- improved telephone services
- improved complaint resolution

The major barriers and opportunities to be addressed in service quality improvement include:

- lack of staff and high workloads
- slow approval processes
- internal bureaucracy
- lack of incentives for good performance
- lack of staff training

The majority of these barriers are within the control of the OPS either at the service level or government-wide.

High workload is a major cause of service quality problems.



5.2 Design Gap Research Findings

POLICIES AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS ARE NOT ALIGNED TO SERVE CUSTOMERS AT BOTH THE SERVICE LEVEL AND GOVERNMENT-WIDE

The ability of an organization to deliver quality service depends very much on its policies and management systems that tell everyone within the organization what is important. Policies and management systems must be aligned to support service quality in order to create and sustain a cooperative working environment. If policies or management systems are designed to serve only organizational rather than customer needs, the OPS will be frustrated in many of its efforts to provide substantially better service until alignment occurs.

Voice of the Public

"Problems, Frustrations, etc: 1. Transferred to 4-5 different people before I get the right person. 2. Phone calls never returned 3. Arriving at 8 am and waiting for hours for service. 4. One office would only take credit card - I had to go to another to get what I needed. 5. Legislation too complicated. (Information Overload!!) 6. Getting an All lines are busy, waiting 10 minutes and then the line goes dead - has happened a few times. I must say that when I do finally get the right person, I have found them to be knowledgeable, courteous and pleasant and friendly. The system is the problem - not the people."

Based on the survey data and the Strategy Workshops, key government-wide policies and management systems are not aligned to support service quality.

At the government-wide level, there is no formal statement of government policy concerning the importance of service quality. Accountability for service quality is not clearly part of each job. Authority is often lacking to resolve disputes at the first point of contact with customers. Service quality is not incorporated in the classification and compensation systems. There are few

recognition and reward programs. The Surplus List causes significant delays in replacement of staff. Financial Management policies (Consolidated Revenue Fund) provide disincentives for savings and efficiencies and therefore disincentives to provide better value for tax dollars.

Voice of the OPS

"We need to make better use of the opportunities to generate revenue or redeploy savings instead of losing them to the Consolidated Revenue fund or having to spend unused dollars before the end of the fiscal period or lose them from our base budgets."

RESOURCES ARE NOT DEPLOYED AS WELL AS THEY COULD BE TO FOCUS ON PROVIDING THE BEST VALUE FOR TAX DOLLARS

Voice of the OPS

"Service quality is not so much a resource issue - how we deploy is the real issue."

One of the strongest opinions held by both the Public and OPS is that "improving the quality of service will save money". One of the issues over which the OPS is likely to have the greatest control is resource deployment. Resource deployment is the determination of where to concentrate resources. While it may be warranted to increase staff in certain circumstances, it is impractical as an across-the-board solution. New ways must be found to make the best of existing resources.

Voice of the OPS

"Government as a whole doesn't match resources to priorities, as a result the OPS thinks government doesn't care about customer service."

"We need first of all to determine what is the business, then who should provide it and then how best to provide it - ie. customer service. There is a lack of clarity re: roles and responsibilities which is a big issue. We need to articulate what we will and will not deliver. The OPS

should only provide service where no one else is willing or able to or where OPS must, e.g. justice, control matters, source of last resort/appeal, highly confidential matters, advising citizens of rights, advocacy for vulnerable."

The Strategy Formulation workshops identified that there is an apparent lack of clear understanding about each business of government. This seems to be compounded by role conflicts between advocacy and objectivity or neutrality. However, the research did not attempt to determine whether the Ontario Government should continue to be in or get out of any of its various businesses.

Although much concern has been expressed by senior managers regarding the nature of the business and the number of services offered, when the survey asked the OPS to rate the importance of 21 barriers to service quality improvement, "too many services offered" was the lowest ranked item. This was consistent across all job groups.

The following section deals with issues associated with the structure of services. Concerns were often raised in the surveys and strategy workshops about the lack of integration of various service delivery structures that served common customers.

Voice of the Public

"I think that all the registration forms necessary for a new baby should be provided at the hospital, i.e., health card application, SIN card application, birth certificate application. I was only provided with the birth registration and family allowance applications."

Voice of the OPS

"Redundant structures require customers to relate to too many different bureaucracies. It's like having to go to three different restaurants for the appetizer, main course and dessert. There is a need to address the fundamental underlying structural issues of government within the OPS but also with federal/municipal governments. We need to define functions in relation to each

business and determine who should perform them at each level."

"Once services have been integrated then we need to look at the decentralization of government. Decentralization of vertical "solitudes" will not make any significant difference, we need the cross-functional links. Presently we are organized in vertical alignment rather than horizontal. To decentralize vertical structures will only exacerbate the problem."

IMPROVE ACCESS

Customers identified design improvements primarily in terms of improved access to services. These improvements include:

- extended hours of operation
- the introduction of automated machines for service delivery
- the development of one stop centres
- the use of understandable language
- improved telephone services
- improved complaint resolution

The survey results indicate that the Public attaches relatively less importance to the design of Ontario Government offices and more importance to convenience of location.

THE MAJOR BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO BE ADDRESSED IN SERVICE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The OPS were asked to rate 21 barriers to improving customer service. They were also asked to identify which of these represented the best opportunities for improvement. These barriers and opportunities were then further analyzed within the OPS Strategy Formulation Workshops to determine contributing factors and the degree to which these barriers and factors were within the control of the OPS. The biggest barriers and best opportunities identified in the survey are:



- lack of staff - high workloads
- slow approval processes
- internal bureaucracy
- lack of incentives
- lack of staff training

Most of the remaining barriers and opportunities can be clustered into the groups shown below:

Lack of support and empowerment

- lack of strong management support
- lack of authority to make decisions
- low morale
- labour management relations
- lack of cooperation within own ministry
- vague policies

Complexity

- over-sensitivity to political considerations
- overly complicated legislation
- lack of clear language in forms and documents
- too many regulations and guidelines
- too many services offered

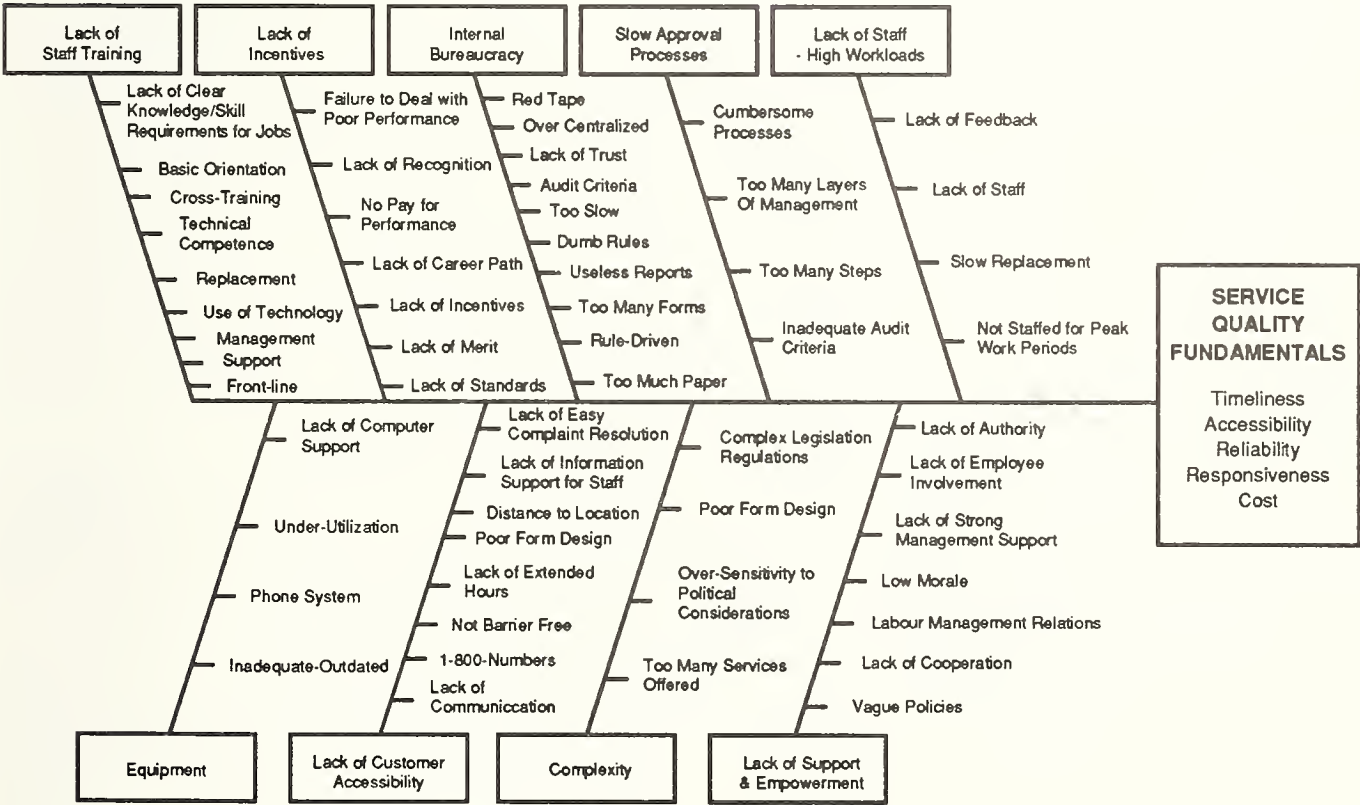
The majority of these barriers are within the control of the OPS either at the ministry level or government-wide. Barriers are seen as more critical by those OPS who are External Service Providers. As well, managers are more concerned about “political over-sensitivity”. This is understandable as they (especially senior managers) have more contact with the political process. Senior managers are also the most concerned (of any job group) about “lack of staff and high workloads”. Front-line workers and support staff are the most concerned about their “lack of knowledge of other ministries”. This is likely associated with the more frequent requirement to make referrals at the front line rather than at the senior management level.

The largest differences between External Service Providers and Internal Service Providers occur with lower ranked barriers and are generally related to complexity such as “overly complicated legislation”. This difference may be related to a

Figure 5.1

BARRIERS TO SERVICE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

5



lack of appreciation for the complexity of issues by the internal specialists.

Voice of the OPS

"Those at Head Office are specialized in a particular area, those who are in the field have to know it all. There is also more pressure on those who serve the Public in terms of providing a quick and accurate response than those who serve internally. Internal service providers can take longer."

External Service Providers and Internal Service Providers share similar perspectives but, in the majority of instances, Internal Service Providers were more positive about opportunities having to do with:

- increasing staff - reducing high workloads
- speeding-up approval processes
- reducing internal bureaucracy
- providing staff training
- providing incentives
- increasing management support

Once again Internal Service Providers indicated slightly less support for opportunities associated with reducing complexity.

WORKLOAD IS A MAJOR CAUSE OF SERVICE QUALITY PROBLEMS

Voice of the OPS

"Need many more staff in order to be able to properly serve the Public. Too much stress on existing staff. No time to do a competent job."

Historically, staff increases have been the traditional government response to increases in workload. Based on the barriers analysis completed in the OPS Strategy Workshops, there are a number of problems that contribute to workload and staffing shortages:

- lack of properly trained staff
- extensive delays in replacement
- staff absences (illness, vacation, absenteeism)
- lack of planning for peak workload periods

OPS respondents overwhelmingly identified that the most important contributing factor to service quality problems is "lack of staff - high workloads". There are two elements to staffing levels, first, the **approved complement** and second, the **actual daily complement**. The approved complement is the total number of approved and fully funded classified civil servants or positions within a service unit.

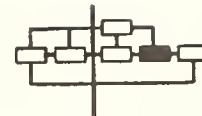
Given the constraints within which the Ontario Government must now operate, it was recognized at the outset of this project that 'across-the-board' solutions to improving service quality that involved increasing the approved staff complement would be impractical.

Voice of the OPS

"The emphasis is on good customer service, but the Ministry is not taking into account that offices cannot provide this when they have staff cutbacks and very heavy workloads on a daily basis, as well as time lost for training and installation of new systems. Staff that are off on sick leave for months are not replaced, thereby adding even heavier workloads and more pressures."

Daily complement is the number of fully trained and experienced staff who are at work on any given day to serve customers. Daily complement is affected by such factors as vacation, leaves of absence, acting positions, scheduled training, delays in filling positions and, of course, absenteeism. The factors associated with daily complement can be more readily addressed than increasing approved complement. (The problems associated with daily complement are also discussed later in this report in Chapter 6 - DELIVERY GAP.)

Workload is a function of such factors as volume and complexity of work, number and skills of people, and the technology applied. The volume of work is affected by both the original work itself (such as processing a document) and rework which is the time and cost involved in correcting errors. Many OPS strategy workshop participants were concerned about the high impact of rework on their workloads. In addi-



tion to lack of staff, the participants in the Strategy Workshops identified that the most important contributing factors to workload include:

- slow approval processes
- internal bureaucracy
- lack of staff training
- lack of support and empowerment
- complexity

Voice of the OPS

"Because of poor form design, a lot of rework is required."

"Adding other responsibilities to customer service responsibilities ends up with the customer getting in the way."

"Generally, there are too many levels of bureaucracy to approve minor changes and too much rework. This results in significant delays. The cost of checkers checking checkers is too high."

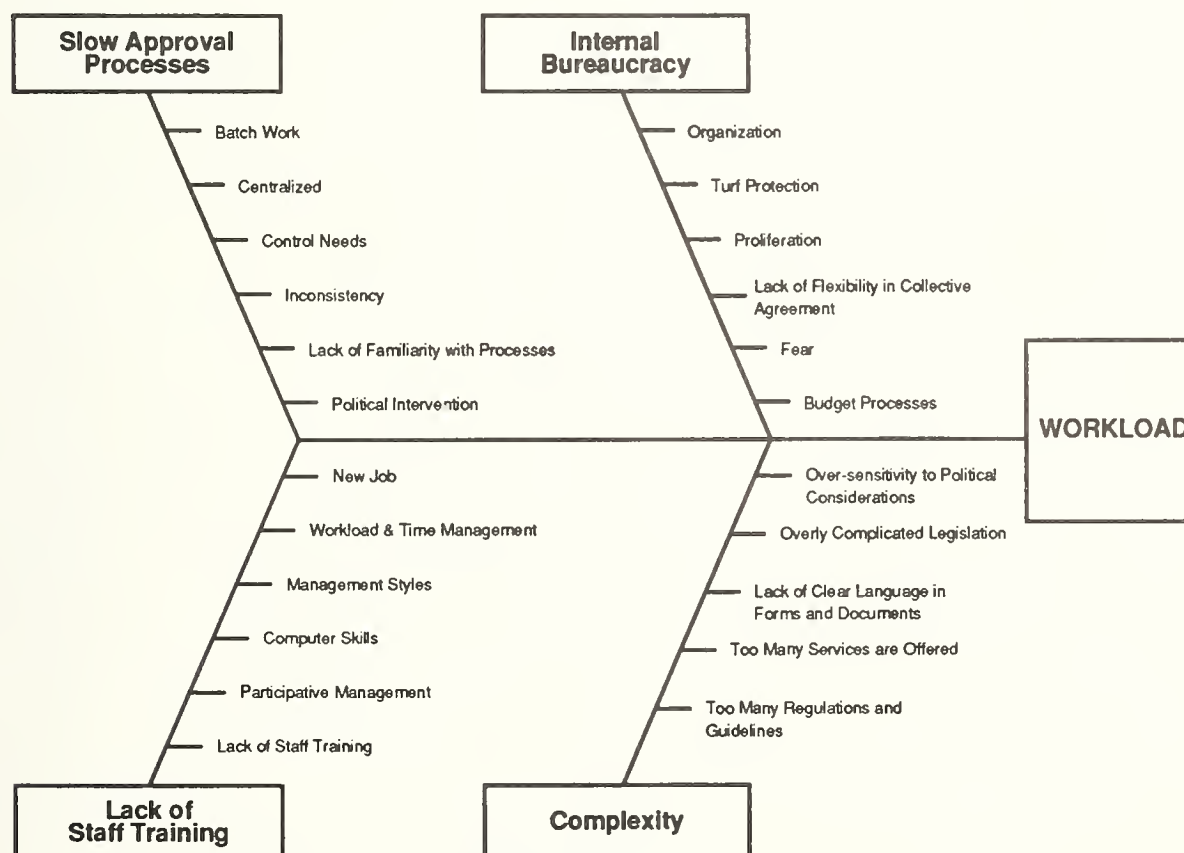
"There are repetitive requests for information being asked in different ways. A lot of time is

spent transposing the same information to different formats."

Internal bureaucracy is a major factor in increasing workload. This contributes to delays caused by unnecessary approvals and levels of bureaucracy. Complexity is also a growing factor in workload. Both the OPS and members of the Public agreed strongly that complexity is increasing. A variety of factors contribute to complexity in areas such as legislation, policies and programs which is further exacerbated by rapid changes. Staff report they find themselves frequently unable to respond properly when called upon to interpret legislation and answer questions about other program areas. This concern is also reflected in Public evaluations of service quality. It is also reflected in OPS ratings of the importance of training and lack of knowledge of other ministries' services as barriers to improving service. Once again, both the OPS and the Public share the opinion that staff are not well-trained but the OPS holds this view more strongly.

Figure 5.2

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO WORKLOAD



5.3 Strategies to Close the Design Gap

Realign, Redeploy, Redesign. The OPS must realign its key policies and management systems at both the ministry and service unit levels and government-wide. Resources need to be re-deployed to priorities. Service processes need to be redesigned to cut red tape and eliminate waste.

REALIGN KEY POLICIES AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

The policy framework of the organization can enable or inhibit operations. The policies of the OPS must support service quality improvement. Policies and management systems exist for the overall government and for ministry service units.

The OPS identified that at the government-wide level, there needs to be a formal statement of government policy concerning the importance of service quality. Accountability for service quality must be clearly part of each job. Authority must be inherent in service jobs to resolve disputes at the first point of contact. Service quality must be recognized in classification and compensation systems. Recognition programs need to be introduced. The Surplus list must be revamped to reduce delays in replacement of staff. Financial Management policies (Consolidated Revenue Fund) should be structured to provide incentives for savings and efficiencies. (See Chapter 6 for more detail regarding the problems associated with the Human Resource policies and management systems.)

At the service unit level, many direct service policies and management systems, resource deployment and service designs are within the control of ministries. These include, for example, the determination of eligibility criteria, levels of entitlement, new service initiatives and customer satisfaction measurement. These policies need to be reviewed and, if necessary, aligned to better serve customers.

REDEPLOY RESOURCES

Resource deployment is a controllable issue. It is not within the capacity of the government to consider across-the-board increases in the level of resources for some years, if ever. However, it is within its capacity to determine how to deploy its present resources to priorities.

The Opportunity Matrix

A useful tool for assessing resource deployment is the Opportunity Matrix. To construct the Matrix, comparisons of customer views of the relative importance and performance of service quality can be plotted to reveal several sources of opportunity. High value (upper right quadrant) exists where the customer's expectations about the most important services and quality elements are matched or exceeded by the customer's perceptions of performance. Services located in this quadrant may represent opportunities to build on these strengths and to learn more about the characteristics of services that match the Publics' perceived service quality needs.

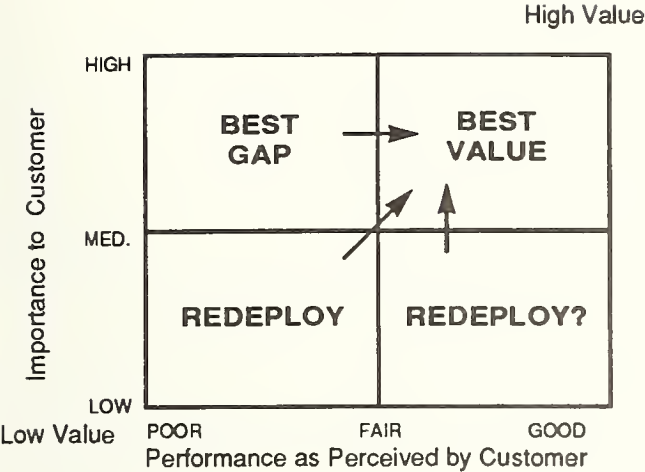
A Service Quality Gap exists when the customer rates the importance of the service high and performance low (upper left quadrant). This situation represents opportunities for improvement where they are most needed. If customers perceive there is a Service Quality Gap, then it is essential to understand the major contributing factors.

If customers rate the importance of specific services as low and performance high, then this may represent a redeployment opportunity (lower right quadrant). In this case, the OPS may be doing a very good job on something that either is not important or the Public does not appreciate it as important. The latter may represent social marketing challenges. Further, it may be that the service is of critical importance to the business but not to the customer.

If customers rate both importance and performance as low, then this represents opportunities to reevaluate these services for redeployment (lower left quadrant). If the service is not



Figure 5.3



important to customers and the organization is doing a poor job, the question must be “Why are we spending scarce resources on this service?”

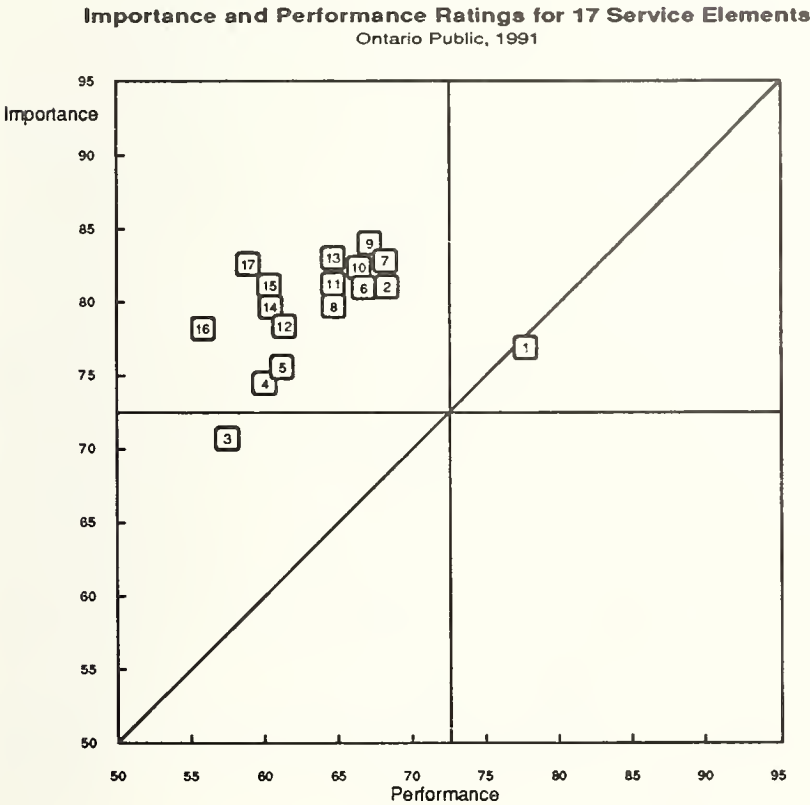
While it was not the purpose of this study to evaluate specific services, the Opportunity Matrix provides a useful tool for the OPS to evaluate their specific businesses and services. The Value-line is the diagonal line drawn from the lower left to the upper right of the Opportunity

Matrix. Value is lowest in the lower left quadrant and highest in the upper right quadrant. The distance and direction from the value-line describes the relative value of the service to customers. The goal is to deploy resources to concentrate on improving service quality and thereby provide the best value for public tax dollars. This is depicted by the small arrows showing how resources might be redeployed based on applying the Opportunity Matrix.

The following examples illustrate the use of the Opportunity Matrix. The first example, Figure 5.4, shows the relative importance and performance of the 17 service quality elements as rated by the Public such as “quick response to my request” and “service was there when needed”. As the Matrix shows, “My confidentiality is protected” is unique in that it is the sole element in which customers’ importance ratings are matched by OPS performance.

The relative importance and performance of all remaining service quality elements reveal a Service Quality Gap. Efforts should be directed to close the “best gaps” which are those elements that are furthest from the value-line and highest on it.

Figure 5.4



Legend

- 1. My confidentiality was protected.
- 2. The office was in a convenient location.
- 3. Staff took pride in their work.
- 4. The office was designed with my needs in mind.
- 5. I got consistent information from different people.
- 6. Procedures were easy to understand.
- 7. Staff understood my needs fully.
- 8. Staff were courteous and helpful.
- 9. I got accurate information.
- 10. Staff gave direct straight answers.
- 11. Staff communicated clearly.
- 12. It was easy to get to the right person.
- 13. Staff were knowledgeable and competent.
- 14. The service was there when I needed it.
- 15. I got a quick response to my request.
- 16. The service was good value for my tax dollar.
- 17. I got what I needed in a reasonable time.

In this example, the service elements that present the best opportunities (that is, the most important - largest gaps) to improve customer satisfaction are:

- 17 I got what I needed in a reasonable period of time
- 15 I got a quick response to my request
- 16 The service was good value for tax dollars
- 14 The service was there when needed
- 13 Staff were knowledgeable and competent

It is questionable that a case could be made to allocate public resources to improve a service or service element already located in the “best value” quadrant. Similarly, it should be difficult to justify continuing to redeploy resources to services or elements that fall into the lower left “redeploy” quadrant. In general, this analysis highlights the high importance the Public places on the elements of OPS service and points, compellingly, to the need for improvement in performance.

The next example, Figure 5.5, plots OPS ratings

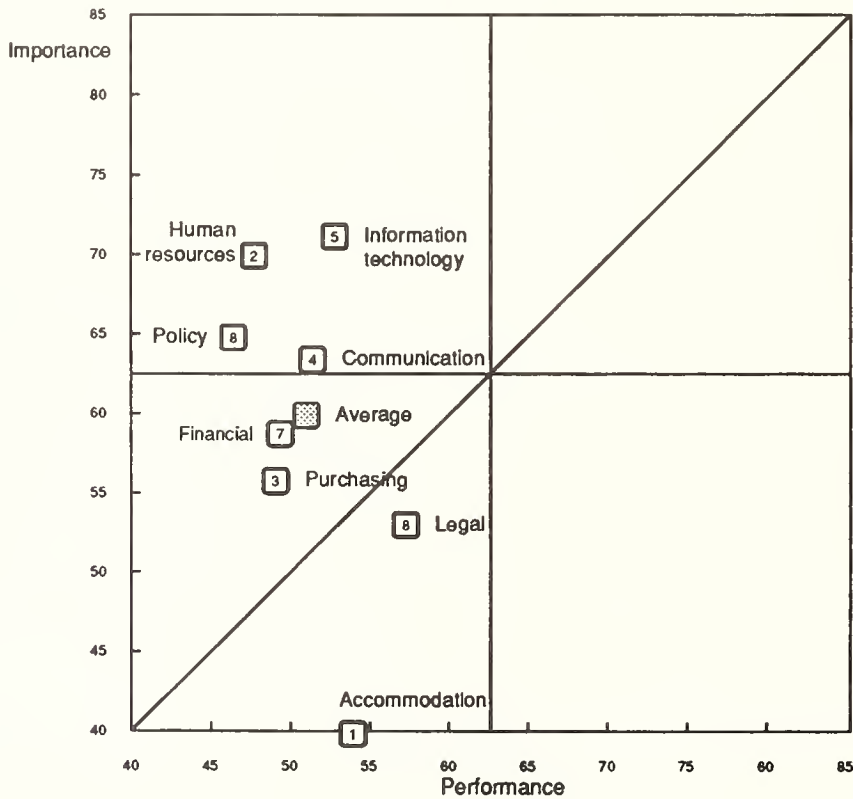
of the relative importance and performance of Internal Services such as Human Resources and Information Technology. In this example, priority performance improvements are indicated for Human Resources, Information Technology, Policy, and Communication Services. According to this analysis, Financial, Purchasing, Legal and Accommodation services should be evaluated as to the possibility of redeployment or improving communication about their importance combined with strenuous efforts to improve performance.

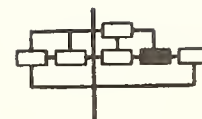
Overall, this analysis of Internal Services shows that a profound improvement is necessary in the OPS’s understanding of the important role these services should be playing in relation to service quality delivery. Improving the perception of their performance may only be achieved if performance (service to their customers) is very significantly improved.

Voice of the OPS

“We should be spending more time negotiating and discussing partnerships with other service providers to improve efficiency and reduce

Figure 5.5
Importance and Performance Ratings of Eight Internal Services
All OPS, 1991





duplication of service. We need to use cross-functional teams to resolve problems as quickly as possible and to examine each of the direct service businesses, identify other OPS service providers to start with and identify opportunities for integration. These integration opportunities can also be extended to Municipalities."

"Integrate OPS service delivery/policy planning at local levels especially in large urban centres. Devolve services to these municipalities with \$/staff where possible."

Build partnerships and integrate service delivery structures to improve service and reduce waste. The development of service partnerships begins with the identification of other providers of related services to the same customers. Partnerships should begin with those in the OPS and then extend to other external service providers. OPS units serving customers with related needs should explore ways to integrate service delivery.

Decentralize integrated services. The integration of services could begin with co-location to improve communication and understanding among service providers and reduce the time and distances involved for customers of related services. Co-location could be as simple as ensuring that all forms that the Public may require are available in the various service locations. For example, as one customer suggested, along with birth certificate applications, also provide health card, social insurance and family allowance applications. Co-location could also mean sharing office space with related service providers.

Redeploy resources to increase front-line staff. Where appropriate, resources should be redeployed to increase front-line staff. There are several ways this can be accomplished by making better use of existing resources. It is important to fill vacancies faster. At present, increasing use of contract staff leads to discontinuities and lack of understanding of customer needs. (See Figure 5.6 which describes the recruitment process and time required to fill the position of a Stationery Supply Clerk with no change to the position description.) The chart describes the

process as seen from the view of the customer and the OPS service unit. There is still a 'line of visibility' even though the customer is internal. The numbers depict the day of completion for that step in the process. The total process took 274 days before the offer was accepted. The diagram reveals that there was a delay of 134 days between the time the advertisement was cleared and the time the advertisement was posted. A major contributing factor to this delay is the Surplus List. The Surplus List is a list of names of civil servants who are under notice of release. When a vacancy exists within the Civil Service, the names on this list must be reviewed to determine whether a qualified candidate might be found to fill the vacant position.

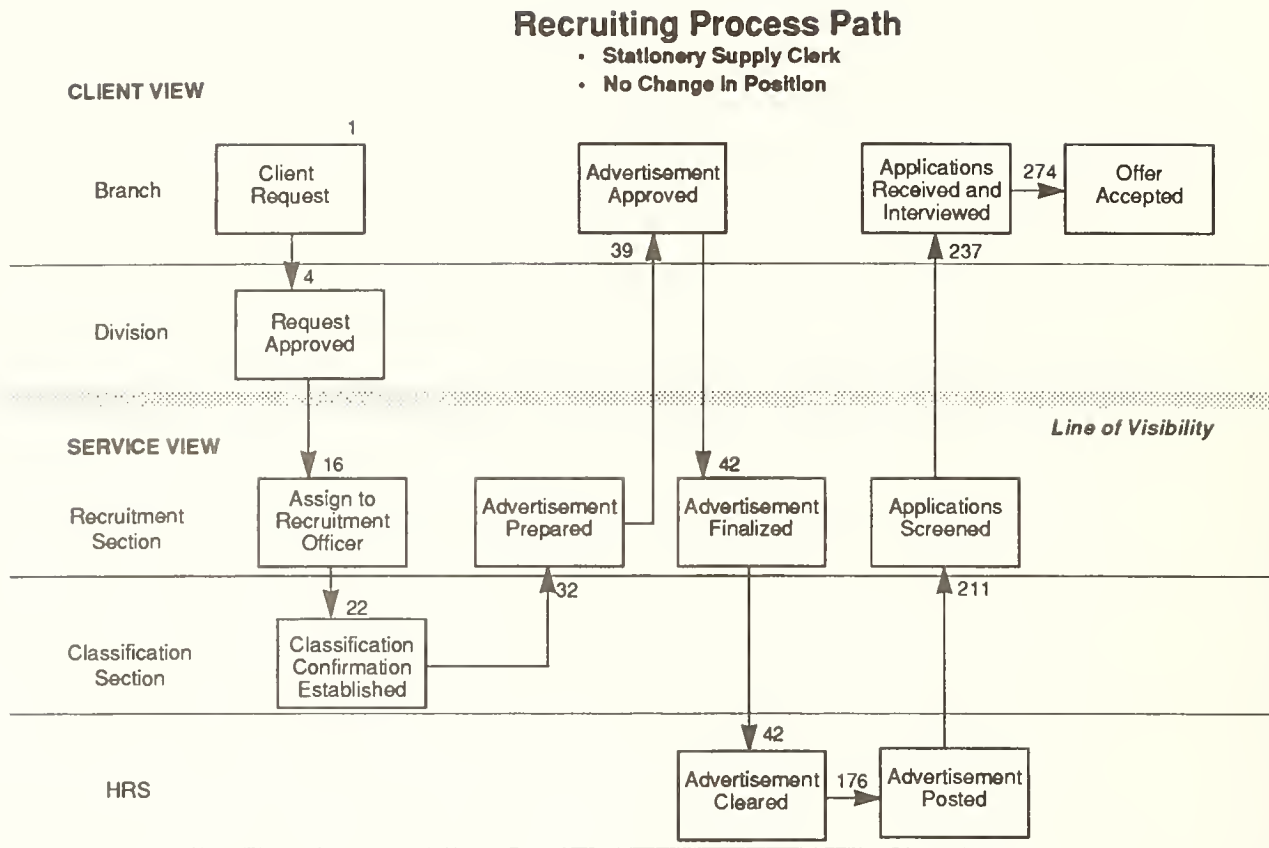
Staff for peak workloads. For a number of service units, peak workload periods are predictable such as lunch hour. Usually at the time the customer can visit the office, OPS staff are away at lunch. An increasing number of OPS service providers are using staggered hours, compressed work weeks and 'flex' time as ways of staffing for peak workloads without cost increases. Cross-training also supports more flexible staffing patterns. By redistributing workloads, pressures are reduced on staff and customers are better served.

5

REDESIGN SERVICE PROCESSES / CUT RED-TAPE

All work is a process. An effective and efficient service process begins with customer input in the form of information, adds value through each step and ends with the desired output. The goal is to increase the value added by each step in the process. The goals of process design are to increase the value added by a service process. This includes eliminating low or no value-added work such as: unneeded reports, inspection and rework; streamlining processes and automating where appropriate or possible. An example methodology for process improvement is outlined in Figure 5.7 and on the following pages.

Figure 5.6



Voice of the OPS

"Reporting requirements should be simplified. The reports have to be meaningful."

"We must question 'dumb rules' and do what is right. We need support from the politicians to do this."

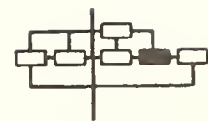
"We need to review manuals of administration and boil them down to the absolute fundamentals. We have to get people to focus on the fundamentals, how to do the job and satisfy the customer. This way things would run a lot better. We still need safeguards to prevent abuses and to ensure consistency and fairness."

Service quality will be improved through a process of eliminating causes of service quality problems such as high workload, internal bureaucracy and slow approval processes. One way to begin to address the issue of high workload involves analyzing each service process to identify tasks that add value for the customer and those that don't. The next step involves taking non-value added work out of the service

process. It means, for example, reducing the number of approvals required, cutting "red-tape", getting rid of "dumb rules" and eliminating rework and any form of waste.

In some cases, it may not be worthwhile to try to improve an existing process. The service unit may have to completely redesign its way of doing business. Each service unit must start with the definition of customers' requirements and the best opportunities for improvement. The fundamental assumptions of each service process need to be challenged.

It is not within the scope of this report to examine automation opportunities other than those identified earlier in terms of improved access. However, **processes should only be automated after they have been analyzed for added-value and then simplified.** As customer access is increased through automated means, the information infrastructure must support decision-making by service personnel. (See the DELIVERY GAP in Chapter 6.)



Process Improvement Methodology

The process improvement methodology described on the following pages is provided for purposes of example. It is a highly simplified description of a framework for introducing process improvement. The methodology incorporates the strategies of “Getting Close to Customers”, and “Aligning Policies, Management Systems and Resources” with process design and redesign.

The success of process improvement depends on a number of critical factors. First, a commitment by senior management, to meet customer requirements and to eliminate sources of service quality problems, is essential. Second, the people who are doing the work must be involved in improving it. A cross-functional process improvement team should represent all service units involved in the process. Third, a systematic approach is needed to eliminate causes of service quality problems beginning with those within the control of the service unit. Fourth, the improvements have to be incorporated into day-to-day service operations. Fifth, the contribution of the improvement team must be recog-

nized and sixth, everyone must be committed to continuous improvement of service quality at lower cost of delivery.

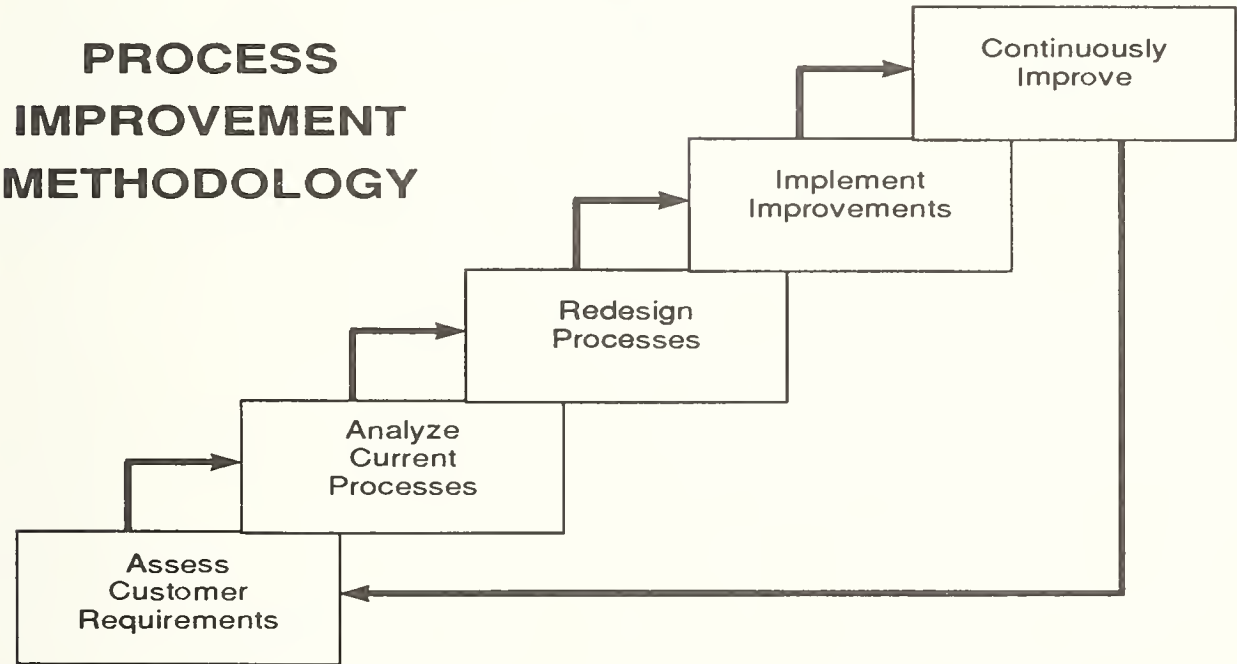
Step 1. Assess customers’ requirements

The first step in service quality improvement is to develop a clear understanding of customer needs. This means getting close to the customer. This includes identifying customers, their requirements and their views of performance. The best opportunities for improvement will be the largest and most important performance gaps.

Identify Customers and their requirements. Assess the importance to customers of both the service and service fundamentals. Find out how the customer assesses the service unit’s performance.

Identify the best opportunities for improvement. Construct the Opportunity Matrix to facilitate deployment decisions. Concentrate improvements on areas that will have the greatest

Figure 5.7



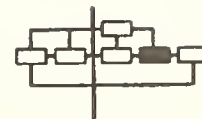
Service Business				
Customer evaluations of importance / performance	Service 1	Service 2	Service 3	Service 4
Timeliness				
# of Contacts				
Access				
Responsiveness				
Reliability				
Cost				
Other				

impact on customers and government priorities. Begin with services and processes that have the most important performance gaps.

Select a key process for initial improvement efforts. Every service business is comprised of several key services and processes. Identify the key processes for each service. Evaluate each service in terms of the impact on service quality and government priorities if it was improved. How feasible is it to try to change this process? Is it within the control of the service unit, the

ministry, the government or some other jurisdiction? How many resources are consumed by the process? How much will be required in terms of money and people to significantly improve the process? How long will it take to implement needed improvements? How visible will improvement in this process be? Will it serve as a demonstration of management's commitment to real improvement? How generalizable are the results? Can other parts of the OPS learn from this improvement?

Service Business				
Key Business Process	Service 1	Service 2	Service 3	Service 4
Impact (if improved) on service quality and government priorities				
Feasibility				
Resources required				
Time to implementation				
Visibility of commitment to action				
Generalizability of results				
Other				



Step 2. Analyse current processes

Describe the Process Path. Block diagrams and flow charts can be used to describe the major steps in the service process. A high level process path begins with the initial contact with the customer, links all points of contact with customers and traces the service as it progresses through each service unit until the service is complete. An example process path is shown in Figure 5.6.

Identify value-added steps. Identify those steps in the process path that contribute to meeting customers' requirements and those that contribute to the proper operation of the service unit. Steps that do not contribute to meeting either of these requirements do not add value to the process and should be eliminated.

Establish baseline process performance measures. In order to objectively assess the process, measures need to be selected and a baseline established. Measurement is strategic and provides direction for improvement. Measures should include the time it takes to complete the entire process, the time it takes for each major step in the process, the number of contacts required to complete the service, access time, rework and redundant activity, and cost per step. Costs will also vary by type of transaction such as phone, office visit, visit by a government employee, automated access or mail. These measures will provide a baseline for assessing improvement efforts. Staff must receive timely feedback on process performance measures.

Conduct Cause and Effect Analyses. When an important gap in service quality exists, the contributing factors need to be identified and analysed to determine the root causes. There are many statistical and design tools available to support service quality improvement. One such tool is the fishbone or Ishikawa diagram shown in Figure 5.1 and 5.2. An important part of service quality improvement is organizational learning. The improvement team should reach a consensus on probable root causes and the best opportunities for improvement. Each root cause should be assessed to determine whether it is within the control of that service unit or ministry.

Identify New Process Standards. Standards should be set as targets for achievement. Organizational learning will take place as different methods are tested for effectiveness and the results are shared. The new standards must be the cornerstone of process design.

Step 3. Redesign Processes

Develop Process Design Proposals. The process improvement team should then develop process design proposals to address major causes and contributing factors that are within the control of the service unit. Once the proposals are approved within the service unit, detailed implementation plans should be developed that describe the actions required, time frames for completion, responsibilities and budget.

Those issues that are not within the control of the service unit should be referred with recommendations to the appropriate level of the ministry or partnerships formed to find shared solutions with other services within the OPS and other key stakeholders.

■ 5 ■

Step 4. Implement Improvement

Pilot test proposals for improvement and assess their effectiveness. Once effectiveness has been determined then the process improvement should be standardized and implemented throughout the organization. Systems must be in place to monitor and directly measure customers' satisfaction with the new process. The analysis of service quality should be on-going to continue to find ways to raise service standards at lower cost. This should be repeated for each key process and sub-process.

Step 5. Continuous improvement through organizational learning

To improve service quality, the OPS needs a strategy for improvement and a systematic

approach to problem-solving in order to constantly add value and eliminate waste. Service quality improvement must be approached systematically or it will not produce lasting results. People require specific quality improvement methodologies and tools to aid improvement efforts. Continuous improvement involves on-going reciprocal learning between customers and the OPS about what is important to customers and what level of performance is possible.

Service quality decision-making should be closest to the customer. For employees to make decisions correctly they need to know the context, policies and priorities. Clear performance standards increase predictable and consistent performance. One objective is to standardize best practices in work processes, document the best way known and then adhere to it until a better way is known and the standardized work is revised. Standards provide a set of clear and simple rules for employee and management behaviour and enables a constructive, non-judgemental approach to problem-solving.

Successful performance improvement requires feedback on performance on critical factors. Each service must determine what information is needed and its nature and frequency in order to enable self-improvement. Continuous improvement requires flexibility so that members of the OPS are encouraged and empowered to improve work standards, to give employees a greater sense of control and to encourage effective decision-making at all levels in the organization. Effective decision-making also requires that the limits of authority be clearly defined in order to accelerate and improve the decision-making process.

Continuous improvement involves the building of consensus and decentralized decision-making. It requires cross-functional integration and coordination. Continuous improvement is a way of doing business that involves everyone making everything better all the time. It is an unending commitment to improvement that results in better service at lower cost.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking is a process of identifying every aspect of the organization's activities, setting priorities, seeking out those who are the best performers in each area regardless of whether they are public or private sector and establishing "benchmarks" or goals to aim for. A number of organizations begin with internal benchmarking as proof of the organization's ability to improve and to identify "best practices" that have already been developed in order to accelerate organization-wide learning.

The following material on benchmarking was developed by the XEROX Corporation and is reproduced here with the permission of XEROX Canada. Adaptations have been made to meet the needs of the OPS.

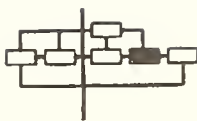
When the cost of doing business is too high and the quality of service is not high enough, benchmarking helps discover methods which can improve the quality of work output. Benchmarking is a structured approach for looking outside the organization by studying other organizations and adapting the best outside practices to complement internal operations and creative new ideas.

Basically, benchmarking is a process that consists of five phases, starting with the planning phase and evolving through analysis, integration, action and maturity. Figure 5.8 shows a summary of the major phases involved.

Guiding principles for benchmarking

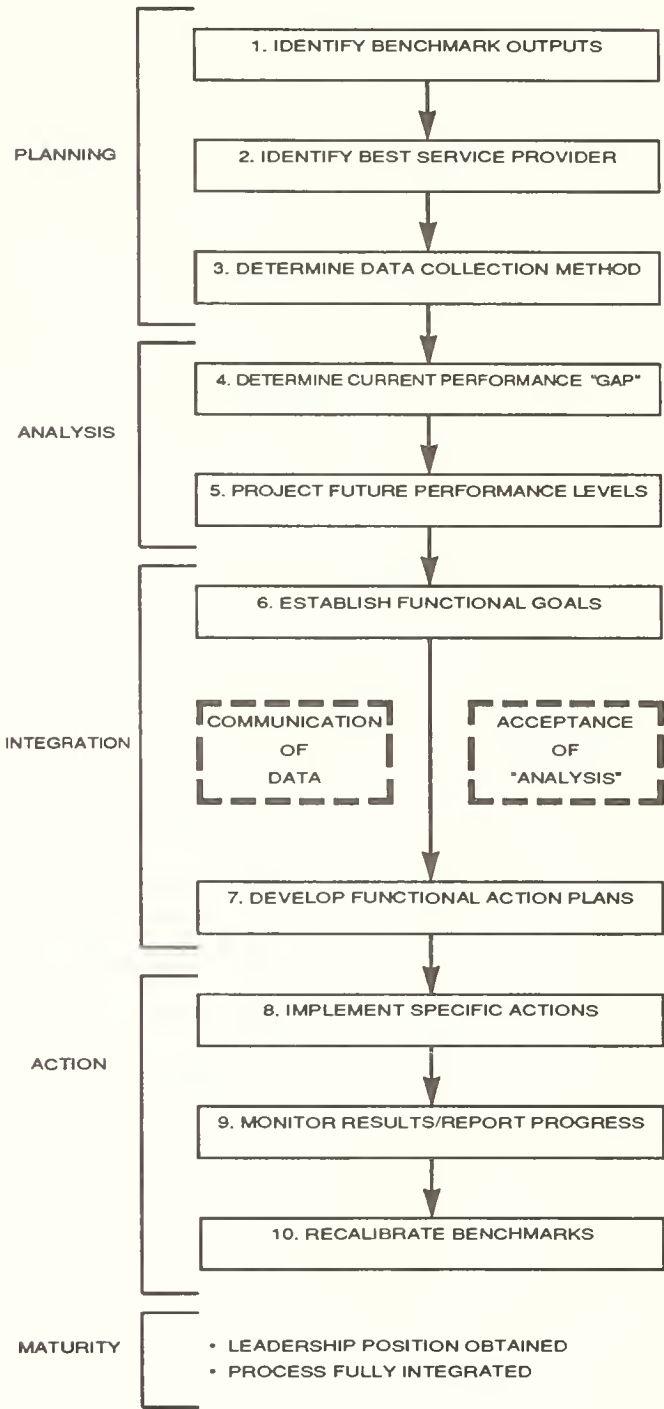
Organizations that have used benchmarking to make major improvements in their work have found the following points to be very useful:

- *successful benchmarking depends on a commitment from management*
- *successful benchmarking depends on how well you know and understand how your own work is accomplished*
- *successful implementation of the benchmarking process and results depends on a willingness to both change and adapt*

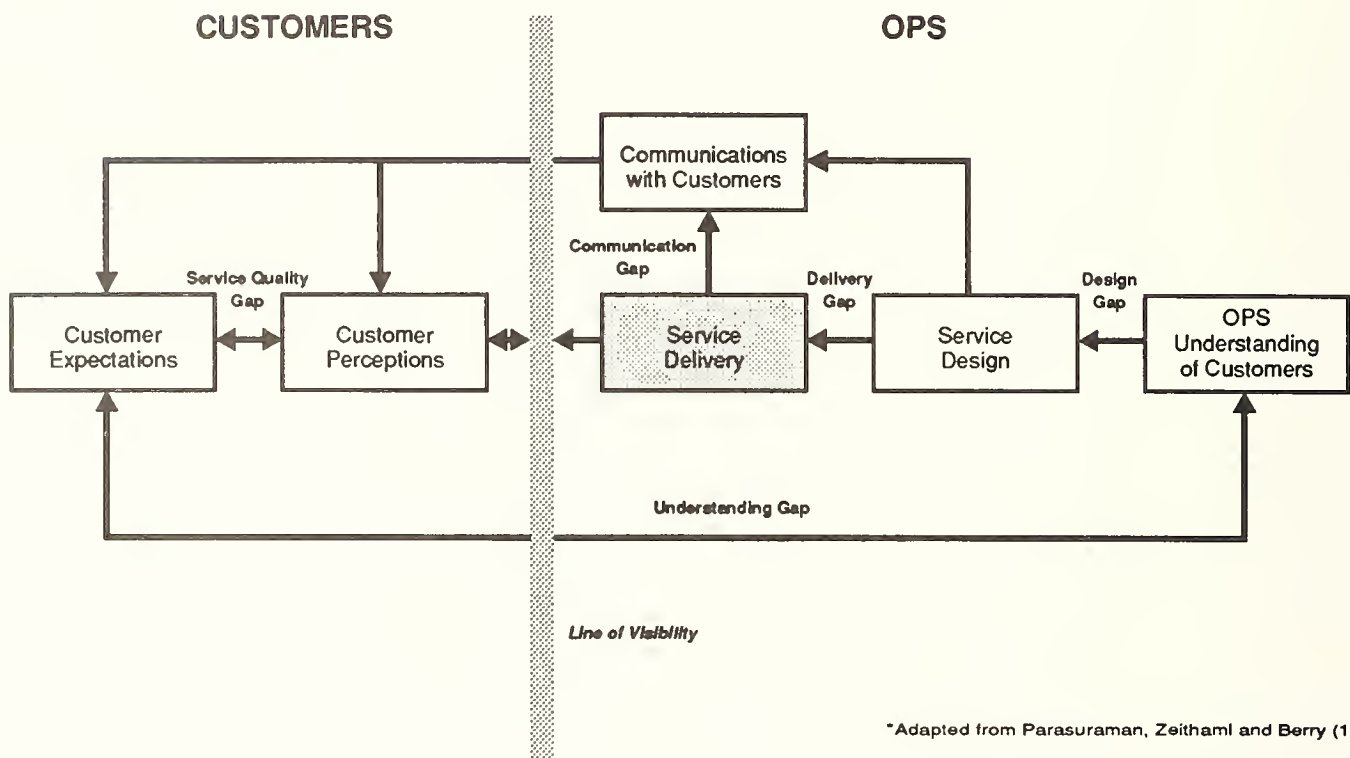


- *"shoot ahead of the bird" - realize that expectations are constantly evolving and customer requirements continue to become more demanding*
- *organizations are more willing to share than you might expect, but do not ask for anything that you are unwilling to share about your own operations*
- *the focus during benchmarking should be on the enabling practices as well as the performance measurements*
- *in benchmarking, look for leading organizations (public and private) that are recognized as leaders in your area of interest, and at internal units that are known to be effective in similar work*

Figure 5.8
COMPETITIVE BENCHMARKING
KEY PROCESS PHASES



THE DELIVERY GAP



*Adapted from Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985)

The DELIVERY GAP is the difference between how service systems are designed to operate and how services are actually delivered.

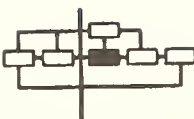
6.1 Introduction

As discussed in the Design Gap, barriers to service quality exist within OPS service systems in relation to the design of policies, resource deployment and service systems. Even when services are designed to meet customers' reasonable expectations, differences in service quality may exist due to variability in employee performance.

Services are not subject to the same controls as in a manufacturing process. Unlike manufacturing, services are simultaneously produced and consumed at the point of delivery and therefore quality cannot be assured in advance of service

delivery. Services are more difficult to measure and to set specific standards for than manufacturing output because of intangibility. Unlike manufacturing, the Public is directly part of the service process and can significantly affect it. For these reasons, it is very difficult to separate service processes and service outputs in the customer's perceptions of quality. For example, customers may perceive service quality as poor if they have to wait a long time, even though the information they eventually receive is accurate.

Also some variation in service is to be expected and is, in fact, desirable to allow for adaptation to local and individual circumstances. However, a wide range of variability is cause for concern



and may be due to common causes that are within the control of the government to address. The Delivery Gap focuses on factors related to the motivation and management of the OPS.

Given the rate and complexity of change, **the most critical factor in the delivery of direct services is the people of the OPS.** The importance of people is increasing, particularly in the delivery of non-routine services. Increasingly, quality will depend on staff's knowledge and skill in dealing with non-routine requests for service. Objective standards also become more difficult to define and will tend to take on more of the nature of professional standards.

Think Tank

"We need to unleash people's potential by changing the management framework."

Despite advances in automation and other technological innovations, one of the most important challenges for the OPS is management innovation. The majority of comments in this chapter pertain to innovations in management philosophies and styles and were developed in the OPS Strategy Formulation Workshops. An important ingredient in the success of service

quality improvement efforts will be the change management process itself. (See Chapter 8.)

6.2 Delivery Gap Research Findings

There is a gap between the way services are designed and the way they are delivered. The OPS Strategy Workshops identified many instances in which services were not delivered as they were designed. Variability in service delivery exists within individual services units and across different geographic areas. Service jobs will become specialized as more routine services are streamlined and automated. This has major implications for the motivation and management of people.

THERE IS VARIABILITY IN SERVICE DELIVERY

Voice of the OPS

"Decentralization of ministries to allow for local policy formulation has resulted in the inconsistent delivery of programs on a provincial level."

DELIVERY GAP: Summary Of Research Findings

THERE IS A GAP BETWEEN THE WAY SERVICES ARE DESIGNED AND THE WAY THEY ARE DELIVERED

There is variability in service delivery.

As service jobs become more non-routine, the motivation and management of people becomes more critical.

For business and clients that see little in ministry organizational boundaries, they often get confused and frustrated when delivery practices change more from service unit to service unit within the same ministry than they would if one went to another province."

As discussed in the Service Quality Gap, the Public was asked about a number of objective measures of acceptable service in relation to several different modes of service delivery: telephone; over-the-counter and office appointments. Public expectations were on average more reasonable than the expectations of the OPS. Despite the reasonableness of the Public, they perceive a greater gap between importance and performance on the seventeen service elements than does the OPS.

Most routine services lack specific process performance measures. This means that in this research it is not possible to measure service variability directly. There are, however, strong indications of variability based on the Opinion Statements as shown in Table 6.1 that reveals that a plurality of the Public agrees that "regulations and policies are not applied consistently", "People in cities get better treatment than do people in towns and rural areas" and more than one third disagrees that "the Ontario Government treats people equally regardless of gender, age, race, culture or disability".

AS SERVICE JOBS BECOME MORE NON-ROUTINE, THE MOTIVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF PEOPLE BECOMES CRITICAL.

Increasing use of process redesign and automation will free staff from many repetitive and low value-added tasks. The result of improving work processes will increase the standardization of routine service tasks. As this is occurring, complexity is also increasing and the rate of change is accelerating. As a result of these and other factors, the nature of many jobs must change. The jobs will increasingly deal with higher value-added, knowledge work. Even greater emphasis will be placed on the importance of the people of the OPS. Where people were important before, they now become critical to high quality service delivery.

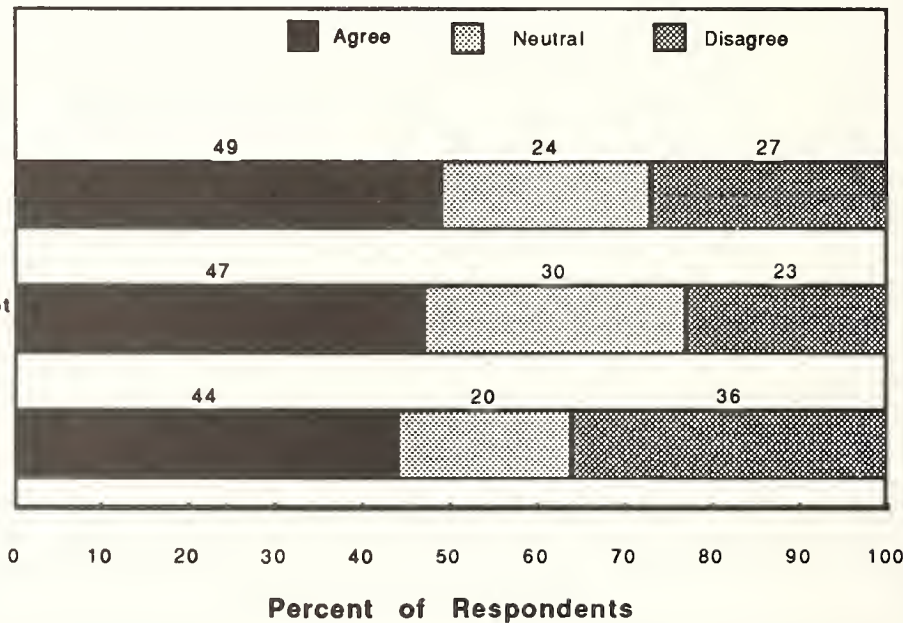
6.3 Strategies to Close the Delivery Gap

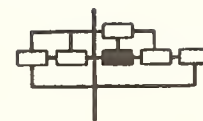
Invest in people and recognize their critical importance in delivering high quality service. The key strategies to close the Delivery Gap include building morale and pride; building the customer into performance evaluations;

Figure 6.1

Opinion:

- Cities get better service than towns, rural areas.
- Regulations and policies are not applied consistently.
- Government treats all equally, regardless of gender, age, race, culture, ability.





recognizing and rewarding service quality and continuous learning through training and development.

BUILD MORALE / PRIDE

Voice of the OPS

"Before you can improve customer service, improve the morale of the staff!"

"Improve morale and you will improve service."

"The lack of funding to provide adequate staff is a serious problem which results in low morale amongst existing service and a greatly reduced level of service to the public. In 20 years with OPS, I have never seen morale so bad! We need better incentives, rewards, recognition for excellent employees to improve morale, e.g. Promotions, wage increases, time off and skills enhancement."

Customer relations mirror employee relations. OPS survey respondents identified that "low morale" is one of the biggest barriers to improved service and one of the best opportunities for improvement. It is almost impossible to obtain high customer satisfaction when employees have low morale. It is essential to improve employee relations because people tend to pass on how they feel they are treated to their customers. Efforts to improve customer service must address employee issues. The OPS wants to do a good job but believes the system is preventing it from achieving high service quality. Pride of work and ownership of a job well done is critical. Increased pride in the quality of work and increased support and recognition from management will lead to improved employee morale.

Expect cynicism. Unfortunately, morale and pride are not issues that can be addressed directly. While morale and pride can have major impacts on service quality and productivity, they are the result or effect of other factors. These factors must be addressed first. There is a need for a visible demonstration of management commitment by addressing issues of sys-

tem-wide concern. Management must go first in the change process.

Voice of the OPS

"Managers can expect cynicism. Many initiatives have been started but aren't finished. Some people will see customer service as the latest management 'flavour of the month'. Management must expect to have its commitment tested."

"If we are so committed to customer service why are we cutting staff and programs?"

"There needs to be a culture within the organization that provides the values and directions - a corporate philosophy that is reflected in practice. It has to be 'Do what I do, not just do what I say!'"

Think Tank

"People need to build trust based on demonstrated management action rather than 'nice words'".

Improve hiring practices. Recruitment and selection are widely recognized as some of the most important human resource decisions managers make. Many concerns were expressed in the narrative component of the OPS surveys regarding Ontario Government employment practices. (Although not within the analytical scope of this research project, 8% of OPS comments were related to Employment Equity issues.)

Voice of the OPS

"We should have a customer service suitability requirement as part of the screening criteria. In addition to interviews and application forms, there should be some performance testing for customer service suitability."

BUILD THE CUSTOMER INTO PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Voice of the OPS

"Until customer satisfaction is the yardstick by which management performance is measured, until we are acknowledged for our superhuman

efforts, until management really buys into the 'happier worker is a more productive worker', and workers can contribute, morale and service will remain poor."

"Everyone needs to relate to the customer. Performance evaluations need to include the ability to satisfy customers. The process should begin with management. Put customer service goals into everyone's annual objectives at all levels - tie reviews to customer satisfaction and improvement."

Think Tank

"The internal customer also needs to be included. Part of each manager's evaluation should include an Employee / Climate Survey. How do they like the organization? - what is lacking?, etc. In addition to evaluations on contribution to corporate priorities, include evaluations by peers and by staff. The evaluation should also look at both the results and how they are achieved."

For the second year, customer service expectations are formally included in Deputy Ministers' performance agreements. This practice should be extended throughout the organization.

Evaluations should include the ability to satisfy internal customers. The process should begin with management and should involve staff and peers in management evaluations.

As the linkage between customers and service personnel is strengthened, employees will relate more strongly to the customers than to the organization. At present, the relationship is heavily skewed toward the organization. Caution should be exercised to ensure that staff, in their efforts to "satisfy" their customers, do not diminish the government's regulatory responsibility. The measurement system must avoid "personality contests" in dealing with internal customers. Objective measures of service quality such as timeliness, accessibility and reliability and cost should be included.

RECOGNIZE AND REWARD SERVICE QUALITY

Recognition and reward is an important and often over-looked element of employee morale and pride. This includes addressing key elements of job satisfaction, making it worthwhile to "do it right", improving hiring practices, and supporting and empowering employees. OPS staff identified a number of factors that influence job satisfaction in the strategy formulation workshops. These include:

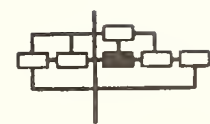
- job title
- autonomy - decision-making - empowerment
- variety of work
- consistency of support from management - organizational structure
- performance evaluation
- recognition
- compensation-basis and incentives

Make it worthwhile to "do it right". The OPS staff identified lack of financial incentives as a major obstacle to service quality improvement. Compensation should reflect the importance of customer service. The current view is that customer service positions are often the least well paid. Compensation should include the ability to satisfy the customer. While workshop participants agreed that compensation was important, they also identified that incentives mean more than money and that more money does not necessarily mean higher job satisfaction.

Voice of the OPS

"We don't value people who have Public contact in terms of training investment or experience."

Incentives for performance can also include developing people through methods such as career paths, job enrichment, work on a corporate project and developmental assignments. There are many opportunities to provide both formal and informal recognition. A number of ministries have begun to provide customer service improvement awards. Another way to recognize customer service quality could be to revise internal audit criteria to include a 'value for money' customer-focus. For example, auditors



could review cycle times and other key process performance measures to provide an independent assessment of service quality measures. At present, many members of the OPS feel that there is little recognition for a job well done.

A number of factors were also identified that relate to government-wide policies and management systems that have the effect of providing disincentives to improved service performance. Disincentives exist when there is no corrective action taken with respect to poor performance. Examples here include the misuse of developmental assignments as ways of dealing with poor performance and “automatic” pay increases rather than increases based on merit.

Voice of the OPS

“Why should I do a good job, if someone else doesn’t have to?”

“One of the big concerns is the lack of support for people who are doing a good job. Also not dealing with poor performers so that it doesn’t make a difference to do it right. When you do try to deal with performance issues, you do not get any support for it. “Don’t rock the boat”. Sometimes it is not just a question of a lack of support but the whole administrative bureaucratic process is designed to frustrate you and make you fail. There is a lack of an adequate process to deal with problems.”

Many workshop participants identified the demotivating effects of management failure to deal with poor performance stating that it increases workload for others and builds resentment.

While most OPS workshop participants were familiar with the concept of progressive discipline, there was a pervasive feeling that there are too many disincentives for managers to use this approach.

The concept of “progressive motivation” (see Figure 6.2) was tested in the workshops as a potential way to help recognize and reward the contributions of staff. Workshop participants felt that “progressive motivation” could be a very useful tool for supervisors and managers if used in a sincere and constructive manner.

The steps in progressive motivation correspond to the steps in progressive discipline except that the goal is to “catch people doing it right”.

Support and empower employees. “Slow approval processes”, “lack of strong support from management” and “lack of authority to make decisions” were among the top ranked obstacles and opportunities for service quality improvement. While the concept of empowering employees has received increasing recognition from many organizations as an essential ingredient for improving customer service, it is probably the most difficult to implement.

Voice of the OPS

“I am a conscientious employee and am embarrassed when I cannot help, or direct, a member of the public, and get very frustrated when my own supervisor cannot, or will not, find the answer for me, or direct me. Managers need to keep their employees properly informed!!!!”

Figure 6.2	
PROGRESSIVE MOTIVATION	
STEP	EXAMPLE
Informal discussion	A simple thank you or expression of appreciation
Letter of recognition	Immediate supervisor
Developmental assignments / merit increase	Corporate or cross-functional projects/ job enrichment/pay increases
Promotion	Based on career path and opportunities available

Increase employee involvement in service improvement processes. The vast majority of the OPS are dedicated people who want to do a good job. There is both a high degree of interest in improving service to the Public and a willingness to work with new approaches. One of the best ways to improve service quality is to establish process improvement teams to re-design processes to improve service and reduce costs. Team composition is important and should provide for a voice from all areas related to the process to be improved. People who are doing the work need to be actively engaged in improving processes. Many employee suggestion programs fail because of management "bottle-necks" that create delays in approving changes recommended by employees.

Empower staff to resolve customers' needs at first point of contact. Staff who are closest to the customer should have the authority to respond to and resolve customer requests (especially routine requests) at the first point of contact. Service personnel must have the authority to interpret customers' needs in each circumstance and make the appropriate decision.

Voice of the OPS

"People who know most about the customer should be able to make informed decisions. Delegating the work is not the problem, there is little or no authority to go along with that to implement changes or make improvements."

Think Tank

"People need to be given the authority to do something which is clearly defined in improving customer service."

Process redesign can help to remove layers of unnecessary approvals and associated delays. However, jobs need to be designed to have "inherent" not just "delegated" authority. Inherent authority means that the authority is built into the job description rather than delegated. Delegated authority is too often "taken back" or left in a state of uncertainty by the behaviour of the manager. As well, delegated authority may not be "accepted" in practice by the employee.

Better service requires better information for decision-making. As service personnel are freed by automation to deal with more non-routine requests, they will need new skills and a supportive information infrastructure. Customer service employees need better and faster access to up-to-date information. Participants felt this was particularly true in regard to new legislation and programs. There is also a need to coordinate and integrate information to better meet customer needs in addition to administrative program information needs.

Voice of the OPS

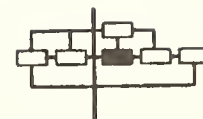
"Staff need to have more accessibility to information that senior management has. They also need more timely feedback in order to know what is going on."

Expect resistance to change. It is generally the experience of organizations that empowerment is welcomed by front-line staff and resisted by supervisors and middle managers. This is to be expected because supervisory and middle management positions are most dramatically affected by the change in the power structure in terms of information flow and decision-making associated with empowering employees. Management will need help in changing their roles from those of gatekeepers and controllers to coaches.

Voice of the OPS

"In introducing these changes, the OPS should expect to encounter a lack of willingness to let go particularly at middle management levels even when decision-making has been decentralized. People will be reluctant to start to make decisions for fear of the consequences of failure. They will continue to "delegate up" and await decisions without clear direction and support from management."

Considerable effort will be needed to get people to accept authority and the associated accountability. Many people may be reluctant to accept new authority. They may wonder whether management is sincere. They will need continuous reassurance and demonstrated support.



Require senior management to have direct contact with customers. To ensure that senior managers understand “customer and employee” realities, senior managers should commit to spending regularly scheduled time each month in direct contact with customers. While many senior managers might feel that they are already spending time directly with customers, this is not visible to staff. Senior management involvement needs to be visible.

Voice of the OPS

“Senior management should make themselves more accessible and visit the workplaces. They need to be more visible. It is a way of building a rapport with staff. A passive “Open Door” policy is inadequate. There are too many ‘screens’ in the way. There needs to be two-way communication, one way communication is inadequate. Senior managers need to strive to create a cohesive team concept.”

Support calculated risk taking. Calculated risk-taking demands:

- a context for decisions such as values, policies and performance standards
- direct and frequent feedback on performance from customers and supervisors
- a balance between customers’ desires and the regulatory roles of government

Voice of the OPS

“We need a commitment to customer service to put the customer front and centre. This saves time and resources in the long run because we are doing the right thing rather than just doing things right.”

Think Tank

“Every service policy should be evaluated as to the risk of non-conformance and the frequency of occurrence vs. serving organizational objectives. There is a need to focus on the key issues. Sometimes the cost of control is more than the risk.”

“Failure must be acceptable if it’s to be a learning opportunity and if people are trying to apply good judgement in dealing with a customer.”

Fear inhibits innovation and leads to “covering your documentation”. Most performance measures have been based on management needs for accountability and control. This creates a bureaucratic “command and control” organization to eliminate risks. The traditional OPS emphasis on accountability has increased “checks and balances” at the expense of responsiveness. It will be extremely difficult to change this “culture”.

Voice of the OPS

“People are afraid to innovate. If you are going to innovate you have to have the chance to fail. You had better be right. We put into practice a whole system of covering yourself. We dilute accountability. There is no choice but to be bland. Any innovative idea is likely to attract attention. If it goes wrong, big trouble. We need to innovate but the rewards are few and the penalties are large. We need to have a clear statement of values right from the top about what is important, have to put teeth in it, has to be translated into performance contracts and evaluations. Reward and recognition systems ought to be designed to reinforce those values and publish those accomplishments.”

“There are legitimate concerns about ‘fishbowl’ vulnerability which lead people not to want to take risks in decisions - so they defer. It is the OPS culture to avoid risks. Words of encouragement to take risks are great but as soon as there is a problem - ‘it hits the fan - next time I won’t take the risk’. This leads us to duck issues. As well, given eligibility criteria and regulatory responsibilities, government cannot be expected to please everyone.”

Coach in risk evaluation - emphasize training rather than control. In addition to process redesign to remove unneeded inspection, approvals and rework, explaining what risk is and how to evaluate it, needs to take place at all levels. The strategy is to place emphasis on training rather controlling. An atmosphere must be created that will encourage calculated risk taking. At present, the OPS believes risk taking is more often punished rather than rewarded.

Think Tank

"People need to believe that it's okay to say they need help. At the time of error, it's the time to coach. It's okay to have failure but you're still responsible and accountable. Management responses to errors or failure will determine people's willingness to take calculated risks. Actions will speak louder than words."

TRAIN! TRAIN! TRAIN!

The OPS identified that lack of knowledge and lack of training and experience were among the top obstacles to service quality improvement. Many are concerned that workers who have the most direct customer contact are often the least well-trained and least experienced. Many also expressed concerns about the lack of investment in training.

Voice of the OPS

"Lack of training re: new mandates or when you change jobs. Workload management and time management requires priority setting and training. Lack of understanding of services offered by your own Ministry and others. Need training in management styles. Need training in participative management and use of work groups and delegating authorities. Cross training has to be ongoing. Knowledge and skill requirements should be clearly defined for each job. There should be internal training / people training each other."

Think Tank

"With layering and empowering - if your people aren't trained to make decisions you will have major problems."

"Training needs to be part of each business plan in order to resource training. Time must be allocated and it must be followed-up and measured. Training is a reciprocal responsibility. There is a need for individuals to make a commitment to personal development as well as corporate commitment to support it. The OPS should ensure that customer satisfaction is integrated into every training program."

"Training is a reciprocal responsibility. Each employee needs to make a commitment to personal development as well as corporate commitment to support it."

Train front-line staff. The Strategy Formulation Workshops identified a number of training needs. The most consistently identified front-line training needs were:

- technical / computer
- English as a Second Language
- legislation interpretation
- referral / other ministries services
- courtesy service

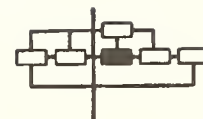
Train managers and professionals. The most consistently identified management training needs were:

- human relations
- self-directed work teams
- planning / consultation / negotiation
- team work / participation
- technical competence

Cross-train for flexibility. Cross-training involves training and developing employees in a work group to perform the functions of others in the same work group. This allows for rotation of work assignments, replacement coverage during periods of illness and back-up during times of peak workloads. It will also enhance portability of skills and job security.

Voice of the OPS

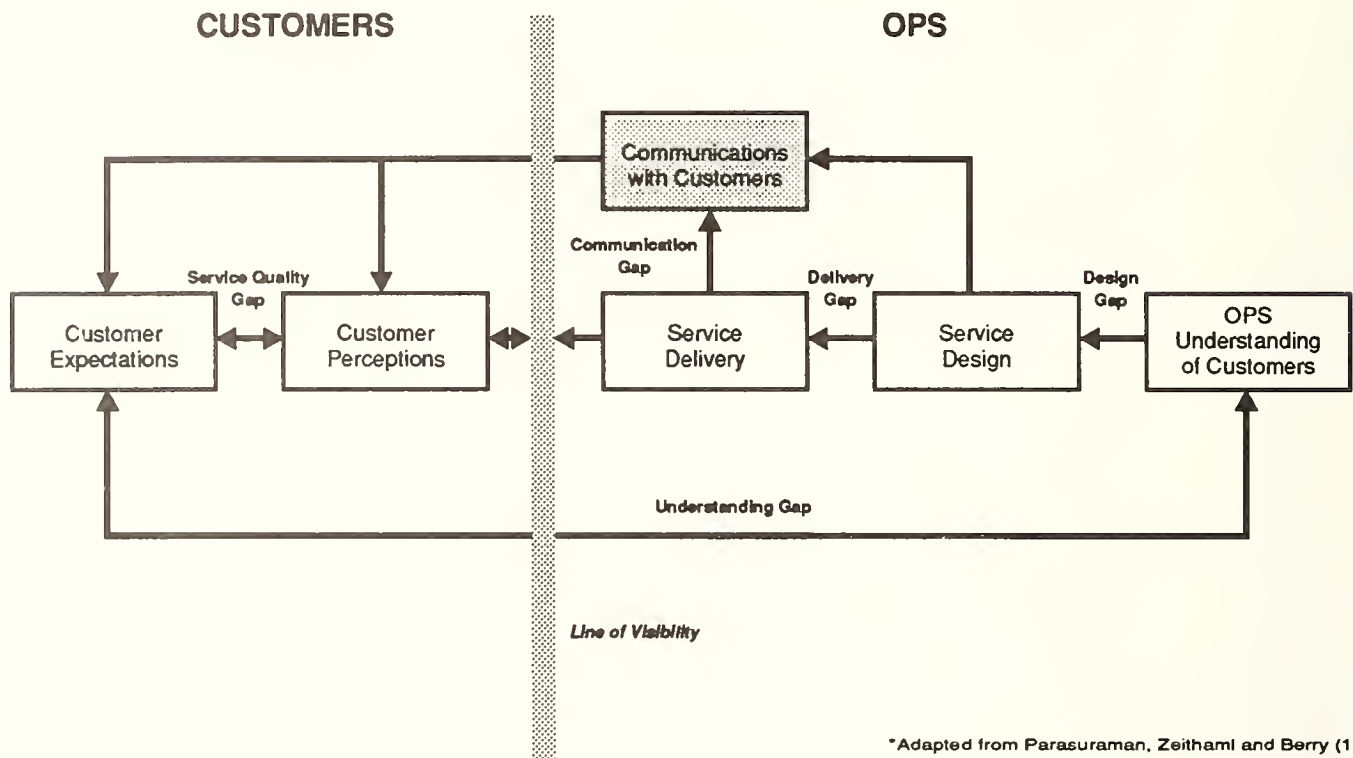
"We should consider cross-training staff for interchangeability so that we can move staff around to meet customer service demands. We need to develop contingency plans and a pool of properly trained people to draw upon. Training also has an impact on workload demand in order to free up people to be trained. There are financial considerations as well, not so much in training, but in upward reclassification. The notion of cross-training needs to be explored further in terms of impact on classification. This will create problems in trades in particular but it adds to job security."



All staff should be trained in how to use service quality improvement tools. Staff need to be trained in the philosophy of continuous improvement and service quality. There are a great many service quality improvement tools available to support employee teams in their improvement efforts such as the cause / effect or fishbone diagrams used in the Design Gap.

Accredit all training. In order to recognize the importance of training and to provide incentives for people to continue to be trained throughout their lives, all training offered by the government should be accredited.

THE COMMUNICATION GAP



*Adapted from Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985)

The COMMUNICATION GAP is the difference between service as actually delivered and communications to customers about OPS service capabilities.

7.1 Introduction

Is the customer being promised a type or level of service quality that cannot be delivered? Communications to the customer about service capabilities have a significant effect on customer expectations. Unmet expectations will result in dissatisfaction and erode trust in government. Communications to the Public must also address special efforts being made to improve service quality that may not be apparent to the customer. In this way external communications can affect expectations as well as perceptions of service quality. Its better to under-promise and over-deliver than to create unrealistic expectations and then fail to meet them.

By identifying service performance standards, the organization is forced to focus on the customer's view of service quality. A service unit cannot make a service promise and then fail to keep it, otherwise customer perceptions will only deteriorate. Service units must guarantee service and must be accountable for their service promise.

Guarantee:

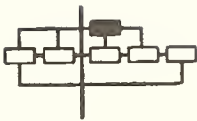
30 minutes or it's free!

Pizza! Pizza!

If it's not there by 10:30, you don't pay.

Federal Express

Public communication of service standards plays an important role in clarifying service



expectations for staff. The determination of service capacity and its communication must be closely coordinated across operations, human resources and communication functions. Another element that is frequently overlooked is the role of the customer in the service process. Unlike the manufacturing process, customers are directly involved in the service process and can significantly affect it. Communications should be designed to prepare customers for their participation in service processes.

Voice of the OPS

"Educate the public re services: what they can or cannot get, and how to get it. This would reduce misunderstanding and false expectations - need to market services better. Could reduce time wasted in explaining service and maze they must go through to get service. Hopefully, we should reduce present maze."

7.2 Communication Gap Research Findings

THE OPS DOES NOT ACCURATELY COMMUNICATE ITS SERVICE CAPACITIES TO THE PUBLIC

There are a number of public information sources that are "passive" i.e., the Public must

find out about them and contact the information service. At present, Ontario Government services do not generally actively communicate service capabilities, although some have begun to "promise" turnaround times. Communication is generally limited to Public Service messages concerning such matters as health and the environment, social and labour issues and the promotion of tourism and the hospitality industry. In the absence of efforts to shape realistic Public expectations, the Public is left to form its own expectations about Ontario Government service capabilities. Public expectations are, therefore, shaped by news releases, word-of-mouth, past experiences with government and its experiences with private sector services.

Voice of the OPS

"People (within the OPS) will find open communication threatening because it invites criticism and the loss of traditional power and control over the customer."

"Lack of forthrightness - government waffles - bafflegab - slow things down - definitely not the government culture - reason government is in credibility crisis - afraid we'll get challenged - must protect the Minister."

**COMMUNICATION GAP:
Summary Of Research Findings**

REALISTIC SERVICE CAPABILITIES ARE NOT ACCURATELY COMMUNICATED TO THE PUBLIC

- The OPS does not accurately communicate its service capacities to the Public.
- The Public is largely unaware of many information sources about government.

“Senior management has to value openness. Openness goes against the OPS culture of only sharing information when forced to - i.e., Protection of Privacy Act used needlessly. It should be the exception when information is not shared.”

The idea is not that government should advertise itself. After having made every effort to improve standards of service quality, specific services should realistically evaluate their service capabilities and communicate their capabilities to their customers in terms of a “promise of performance”. Once having made their “service promises”, the OPS must deliver.

THE PUBLIC IS LARGELY UNAWARE OF MANY SOURCES OF GOVERNMENT INFORMATION.

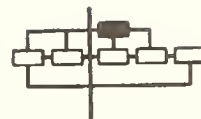
As shown in Table 7.1, the Public is most satisfied with Zenith and 1-800 numbers and with the Ministry of Northern Development and

Mines for those in the North. Most users are dissatisfied with the Blue Pages. While this suggests that the information may be poorly organized, further specific evaluation is required. The majority of the Public are aware of the Blue Pages, the Constituency office of their MPP and Zenith and 1-800 numbers. However, less than 40% of the Public are aware of Community Information Centres. Only a small percentage (13%) are aware of the Citizen’s Inquiry Bureau.

7.3 Strategies to Close the Communication Gap

The OPS must better manage Public communications about service quality by communicating realistic messages about capabilities. Service choices should be offered and customers should be better prepared for participation in service processes through improved communication.

Table 7.1 Sources of Information about Ontario Government Services Ontario Public, 1991			
Source	Are you aware of this source?	Of those who are aware: Have you used this source in the past year?	Average Satisfaction rating of users (0-100)
Blue Pages	98%	89%	58
Constituency Office of MPP	79%	24%	57
Zenith and 1-800 numbers	66%	69%	72
Citizens' Inquiry Bureau, Access Ontario, Access London	13%	33%	68
KWIC Index of Ontario Government Services	16%	50%	64
Ontario Government telephone book	35%	52%	64
Ministry of Northern Development and Mines (for Residents of Northern Ontario only)	76%	25%	74
Community Information Centres - (non-government sources of government information)	39%	45%	68



BETTER MANAGE PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT SERVICE QUALITY

There are two complementary strategies for closing the Communication Gap. The first is to raise the level of service quality using the methods described in the previous chapters. The second is to realistically communicate service system capabilities. Given the lack of Public awareness, improvements to customer telephone access include increasing affordable access such as 1-800 numbers, improving communication about these numbers and on how to access services, and establishing hotlines for customer inquiry that should be staffed by the most knowledgeable and experienced people.

COMMUNICATE REALISTIC MESSAGES ABOUT CAPABILITIES

Each service needs to determine what level of service is possible, communicate a realistic service message and then deliver the service accordingly. Close coordination between communications, operations and human resources is needed to ensure that service promises can be kept. It is essential that the Ontario Government shape realistic Public expectations of service. By making service promises and keeping them, the OPS may be successful in reorienting the customer's expectations and increasing perceptions of service quality, but only if the promise can be delivered reliably.

OFFER SERVICE CHOICES

Much more can be done to offer customers choices. For example, quicker routine (more rudimentary) service or slower, more customized service can be differentiated. Where there is an additional price to receive a particular service, there may be an opportunity to link turnaround time with the price scale. Through better communications, it may be possible to change customer contact patterns, such as time of day and choice of method (in person or by

phone). This demands such alternatives be accessible and effective. In these ways, workload can be redistributed to achieve greater balance and thereby better service.

BETTER PREPARE CUSTOMERS FOR PARTICIPATION IN SERVICES

The OPS can also help to prepare customers for the service by explaining the process at the outset and identifying any requirements (documentation or decisions) expected of the customer to complete the service transaction. This information must be readily accessible by phone and mail. This will help to reduce demands on office visits.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

8.1 Introduction

The research has identified that a Service Quality Gap exists between the Ontario Public's expectations and their perceptions of Ontario Government service quality. A "Service Quality Model" was presented which organized the major contributing factors into four gaps:

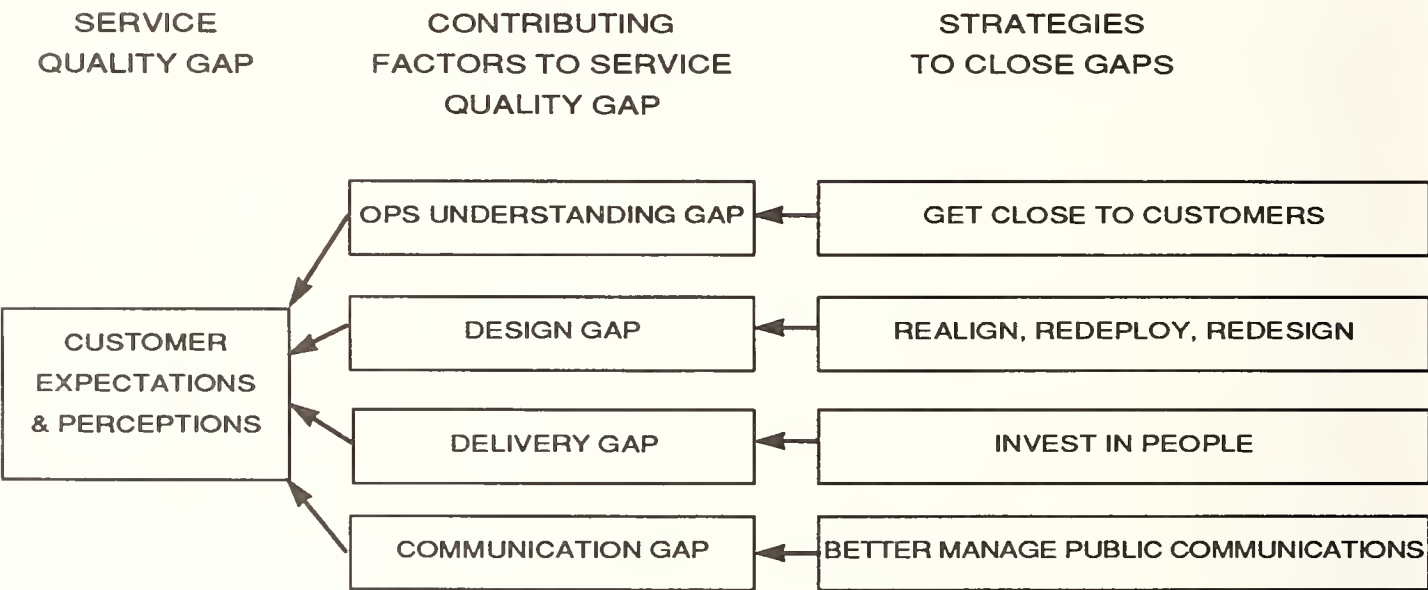
- Understanding of customers
- Design of service systems
- Delivery
- Communication

Four key strategies have been identified by the OPS to improve Ontario Government customer service by closing each of these gaps:

- Get Close to Customers
- Realign, Redeploy and Redesign
- Invest in People
- Better Manage Public Communications

These strategies have significant implications for the government-wide change management. This chapter outlines the key roles to be fulfilled by both central agencies and ministries in implementing these strategies.

GAPS AND STRATEGIES TO CLOSE THEM



8.2 Central Agency Roles

Revolution at the government-wide level is necessary to create an enabling environment for fundamental changes to occur. Government-wide policies must address the need for underlying structural change. The revolution will take place in the process of formulating and committing to a new Vision of the OPS, and aligning and integrating policies and management systems. This integration must be in place for some time before significant change will be apparent. Management Board of Cabinet, in concert with other central agencies, must lead the government-wide revolution in attitude and in action. It must lead, and be seen to be leading, the drive for service quality improvement.

CREATE AND COMMUNICATE A PUBLIC SERVICE VISION THAT VALUES THE CUSTOMER

Value for tax dollars is an evaluation in the Public's mind as to whether the tax dollars paid to the government are worth the service received. This evaluation is based on the Public's expectations of what service quality should be and its perceptions of the quality of service received. Accordingly, a vision and declaration of commitment to service quality that is consistent with the research findings is:

“Ontario Government service will provide the best value for tax dollars of any jurisdiction in the world.”

Successful organizations set very high expectations in their vision commitment. For Ontario, there is global competition to attract and retain investment, to create a location advantage, to promote a high quality of life for all citizens, to maintain a fully employed, highly skilled and productive workforce. The effectiveness and cost of services provided and controlled by government have a very substantial effect on achieving a global competitive advantage.

The government must communicate its service quality imperatives and harness the OPS's motivation to change. The government must act on the pervasive sense of urgency which now exists. Service quality has always been important — now it is critical. Ontario is in direct competition with other jurisdictions outside of the Province to provide better value in the form of higher quality at lower cost. The Province has no choice but to significantly improve if it is to be globally competitive.

LEAD CHANGE MANAGEMENT

An unprecedented level of change is impacting the OPS. There is a profound need for leadership, coordination, and effective communication. The OPS should recognize that **service quality improvement is an on-going, iterative process.** It's never finished. Each service unit needs to aim to be a little bit better every day. The standard of service is being raised constantly by both OPS improvements and by improvements in other sectors. It has taken many years for the OPS to develop its present policies, systems and processes and significant change will not happen overnight. It's a long-term undertaking. Cultural change needs to occur in an overall context of the organization's vision. Cultural change is not a single event but a sequence of events over time.

While the role of central leadership is critical, the definition of service quality must take place at the point of contact with customers. The role of central agencies should be to **“pave the way and stay out of the way”**. Paving the way will require real innovation and creativity in redefining central and corporate requirements for performance and accountability. Practicality and flexibility will be the earmarks of successful change management policies and processes.

**ALIGN GOVERNMENT-WIDE POLICIES
AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS TO
SUPPORT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE
OPS VISION AND SERVICE QUALITY
IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES**

Just as service processes and practices need to be redesigned to support service improvement strategies, centrally-defined policies and management systems must be aligned with priorities to enable ministries to achieve their objectives and for the OPS to attain its service quality vision. Key policies and management systems include:

- setting and communicating priorities
- making accountability and authority part of each job
- declaring war on ‘red-tape’ by eliminating waste in the form of unneeded checks and balances
- achieving a balance between controllership and service
- relating performance evaluations to service quality at all levels for both individuals and service units
- relating compensation to service quality performance
- providing recognition for service quality leadership and improvement
- relating classification to customer service
- eliminating delays in filling positions
- structuring financial management practices (Consolidated Revenue Fund) to provide the motivation for savings by individual services and ministries

**PROVIDE A CENTRAL RESOURCE ON
SERVICE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**

A central resource should be created to stimulate organizational learning about service quality improvement. The resource should:

- document success stories
- develop tools and guidelines
- sponsor quality improvement events
- invite services to submit demonstrated im-

provements for use as provincial process ‘benchmarks’. A benchmark is a process which has been certified within each ministry as its best practice for a specific type of service

- design and support an OPS-wide customer service reward and recognition awards program based on demonstrable service quality improvements that create better value for tax dollars

8.3 Ministry Roles

Many important changes will **evolve at the service level within individual ministries**. Service policy alignment, resource deployment and service design issues are critical to service quality improvement. Across government, ministries and service units are at different stages of development. Some significant service quality gains have been made and further changes will take place at the service level in a series of incremental gains over a period of time. The strategies provide a framework for self-assessment by each ministry and their service units.

Organizations who have successfully improved service quality recognize that a comprehensive approach is needed for real change to occur. The process, however, of aligning government-wide policies, management systems and resources will be a long one. Ministry service improvement cannot and need not wait until all central policies and management systems are aligned. Since most service policies, management systems and processes are within the control of ministries, they should go for small “early wins” to build a base of support.

Pilot projects and cross-functional teams can be used to test comprehensive approaches to improvement. Success is more likely to be achieved if comprehensive plans are first explored in a pilot test. Pilot testing not only allows for a quicker application of ideas, but also contains the impact of possible failure while at the same time providing for maximum learning. Ministries should focus improvement efforts on processes

that have the greatest impact on the greatest number of customers; that are within the control and resources of the OPS to fix, and that will demonstrate commitment to real improvement.

The strategies described in this report are corporate in the sense that they apply to all ministries. However, service quality is not something that can be determined centrally in an organization with services as diverse as the Ontario Government. Performance standards and measures should be specific to each program to allow flexibility in priority setting and targeting. There should not be government-wide standards, for example, with respect to response times and number of contacts, otherwise the system will inevitably become “rule-driven not customer-driven”.

Service quality demands that customer needs drive the design of services. In the past, service design has been largely based on organizational needs - not customer needs. It is time for a fundamental rethinking of the services provided by government and the way they are delivered. The first priority should be to aim to meet existing expectations (which, as the research shows, are not unreasonable). The task is to set realistic service quality targets on dimensions such as timeliness, access, number of contacts, responsiveness, reliability and cost, and then achieve them. The overall strategy is to set progressively higher standards as targets until customer expectations are met. This process must be matched by realistic communications to the Public about OPS service capabilities.

Senior management leadership and support is critical. Developing shared service quality goals and shared understanding of problems and challenges facing the organization is an essential first step. Service quality improvement absolutely must have top-down commitment to be successful. Senior management must demonstrate sustained, visible, personal commitment to service quality. Each ministry should develop a policy on service quality that is “owned” by senior management. It should describe how all levels of the ministry will be involved in improving service quality.

Continuous communication and demonstration of the vision are essential. Success demands that strong decision makers drive improvement because management commitment will be constantly tested. Ministry management must “walk the talk”. The strategic imperatives must be clearly identified and shared, starting with the mission — a description of everyone’s job.

Everyone is responsible for ensuring the achievement of best value for tax dollars. Senior management must be responsible and take the lead in ensuring the achievement of the best value for tax dollars.

In so doing, they make it possible for all staff to become champions of quality service. As a customer focus is integrated into both the formal structure of the OPS and into its everyday life, the achievement of best value for tax dollars will become a reality.

OPS Voice box

“Good service is a by-product of proud people with a keen awareness of the value of what they are doing.”

“We need to introduce changes that ensure we are doing the RIGHT things — things that add value.”

Part II

Public and OPS Survey Results

THE PUBLIC VIEW OF SERVICE QUALITY

1.1 Introduction

Part II of this report presents results of surveys on the quality of Government of Ontario service from both the customer's and the employee's perspective.

Two parallel surveys were conducted in the summer of 1991: one of the Ontario Public and one of Ontario Public Servants. Their purpose was threefold:

- To determine whether the Public and the Ontario Public Service hold similar or different perspectives on service quality provided by the Government of Ontario.
- To identify barriers and opportunities in the provision of good customer service.
- To provide a framework for developing strategies that enhance service to the Public.

Both surveys were designed and analyzed to provide information about the service of the

Ontario Government in general. The research provides a macroscopic view of service; it does not describe the services provided by specific ministries and programs.

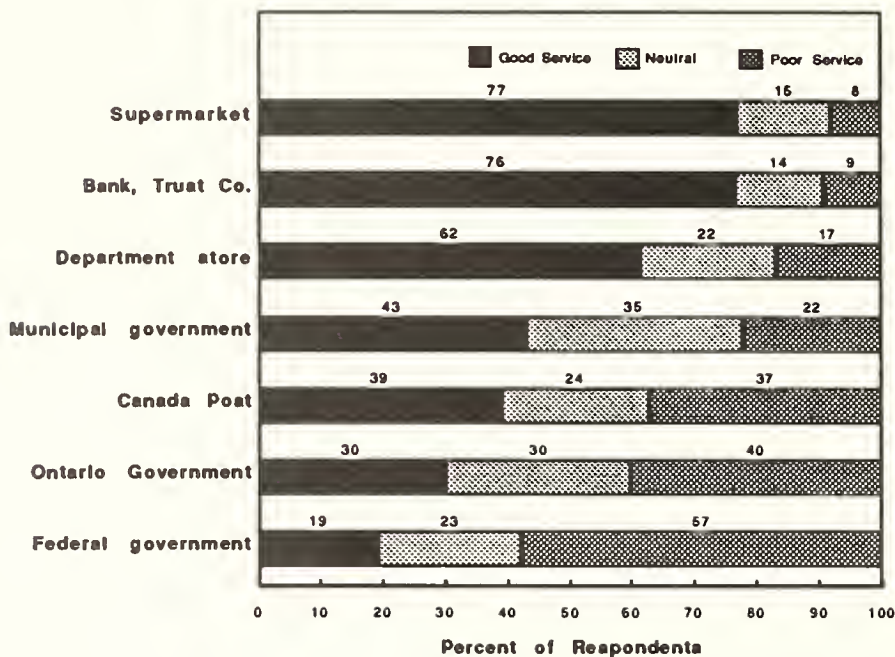
1.2 Overall Quality of Service

The Ontario Public rates the quality of service it receives from the Ontario Government at 45 out of 100 (Table 1). Government of Ontario service is seen to be better than that of the federal government, but not as good as Canada Post or four other organizations that citizens encounter on a regular basis. It is intriguing to speculate on the ranking of organizations. There is a division between private and public organizations, such that the three private organizations all rank higher than the four governments and crown corporations.

Table 1
Overall Quality of Service
Ontario Public, 1991

Average rating	
0 = Extremely poor	
100 = Extremely good	
Your bank or trust company	72
A supermarket you go to	71
A department store you go to	62
Your municipal government	55
Canada Post	49
Ontario Government	45
Federal government	36

Figure 1
How Good Is the Service You Get From These Organizations?
Percent of Ontario Public, 1991



In practical terms, it may be that the business of government, which includes regulation, taxation and enforcement, precludes scores as high as some private organizations achieve. Nonetheless, the score of 55 for municipal governments is significantly higher than the 45 achieved by the Ontario Government.

A more detailed look at the Public's assessment of service quality is obtained by charting those people who described the service as good or poor (Figure 1). The response scale also contained a neutral middle option in addition to the good and poor choices.

Opinion of Ontario Government service is fairly evenly divided: 30 percent consider that the Ontario Government provides good service, 30 percent rate service quality as neutral, and 40 percent as poor. The Ontario and federal governments are alone among the seven organizations in having more people choosing poor service than either good or neutral.

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Throughout Part II of this report, analyses are presented to describe the views of groups defined by age, family income, gender, and other demographic factors. Certain of these factors are consistently associated with differences of opinion, while others just as consistently are not. Results in Table 2 are typical of many such analyses.

Table 2 shows demographic variation in response to the question, "What is the overall quality of Ontario Government service"? Differences as large as 13 points occur on a response scale where 0 means "Extremely poor performance" and 100 means "Extremely good performance". Groups defined on the basis of occupation range from business managers/owners at 38 out of 100 to retired people at 51 out of 100.

While differences of this magnitude deserve attention, it is important to note that differences **within** demographic sub-groups are typically much larger than differences **between** them. There are, for example, business managers who perceive service as extremely good and retirees who see it as extremely poor. The degree to which people vary in their response to any survey item can be quantified statistically. The con-

tribution of demographic factors to this variability is generally well under 5 percent — meaning that factors **other than demographics** contribute more than 95 percent to differences in opinion. Thus, while demographic factors should be taken into consideration, they are often not the primary determinants of people's thinking about Ontario Government service.

Four demographic factors affect the Public's ratings of overall quality of Ontario Government service to a statistically significant degree:

- Age: People over the age of 65 rate Ontario Government service highest, giving it a score of 53 out of 100. Those in age groups under 50 years are similar in their ratings, averaging 43 out of 100.
- Urban-rural: Those who live in rural areas rate service quality lower than town and city dwellers.
- Occupation: Retired people rate service highest; business managers/owners rate it lowest

- Income: Respondents with family income less than \$10,000 rate service highest.

Four other factors do not significantly affect opinion on this matter. These are race, gender, physical/mental disability, and education.

It is important to ask whether these demographic differences reflect opinions that are specific to the Ontario Government, rather than pre-existing differences of age and occupational groups. Consider, for example, the fact that business managers/owners rate Ontario Government service low, while retired people rate it high. If business people were to rate the service of **all seven** organizations lower than retired people, their rating of the Ontario Government would simply confirm that they differ from retirees — this would say little of interest about perceptions of the Ontario Government.

A detailed examination reveals that the demographic differences reported below reflect opinions largely specific to the Ontario Government.

Table 2 Demographic Differences on Overall Quality of Ontario Government Service Ontario Public, 1991		
		Average Rating (0 - 100)
Age	18 – 24 years	45
	25 – 34	43
	35 – 49	42
	50 – 64	47
	65 +	53
Urban-rural	Cities and towns	46
	Rural	40
Occupation	Retired	51
	Student	49
	Homemaker	47
	Professional	46
	Other	44
	Trades, factory	43
	Office worker	42
	Business manager, owner	38
Income	Less than \$10,000	55
	\$10,000–29,999	47
	\$30,000–49,999	44
	\$50,000–69,999	41
	\$70,000–89,999	46
	\$90,000 plus	43

Considering occupation, for example, significant differences among retired people, business managers, etc., do not occur in ratings of supermarkets, department stores, or Canada Post. This discounts the hypothesis that business people are consistently more negative than retired people. The pattern of low ratings for business people and high ratings for retirees does occur in ratings of municipal governments, the federal government, and banks/trust companies. The occupational difference is, however, stronger for the Ontario Government than it is for any of the other organizations.

The other demographic variables concerned — age, community, and income — show similar patterns. This supports the idea that the demographic differences reported in Table 2 reflect opinions of the Ontario Government, and not just characteristics of different demographic segments.

Demographic trends involving age and income are of particular interest.

Age

People over the age of 50 rate the three levels of government, as well as banks/trust companies, higher in service quality than those under age 50.

Canada Post is the unique exception: People over age 50 rate Canada Post service lower than younger age groups.

Income

Families with the lowest income, less than \$10,000, rate the service they receive from public sector institutions higher than do other income groups. Low-income families do not differ from higher income groups in their assessment of private sector organizations.

1.3 Global Opinions of Ontario Government Service

Ten salient dimensions of customer service emerged from the initial focus groups with the Public. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each statement.

The statements that evoked the strongest agreement and the strongest disagreement deal with value for money (Figure 2):

- "Ontario Government service is not good value for tax money" (only 21 percent agree that it is).
- "Improving the quality of service to the Public should save money" (70 percent agree).

The next strongest pair of statements speak to a perception of complexity in Ontario Government service:

- "Ontario Government service keeps getting more complicated" (62 percent agree).
- "Overall, the service of the Ontario Government is not getting better" (just 23 percent think it is getting better).

Although opinion is more varied, a plurality of respondents agree with three statements describing the related themes of equal treatment and consistent application of policy:

- "People in cities get better service than do people in towns and rural areas" (49 percent agree).
- "Regulations and policies are not applied consistently" (47 percent agree).
- "The government treats all people equally, regardless of gender, age, race, culture or ability" (44 percent agree).

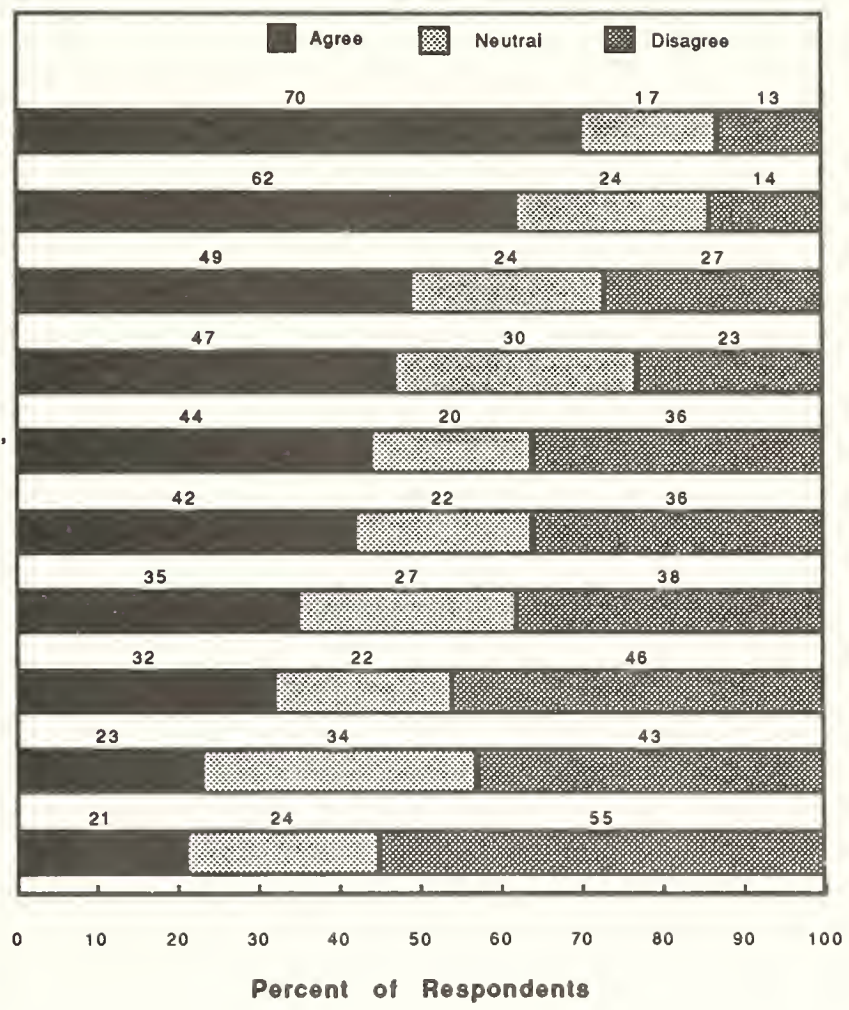
DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF GLOBAL OPINIONS

To what extent do segments of the Ontario population differ in their response to these statements?

Figure 2
Global Opinions of Ontario Government Service
 Ontario Public, 1991

Opinion:

- Improving service will save money.
- Service is getting more complex.
- Cities get better service than towns, rural areas.
- Regulations and policies are not applied consistently.
- Government treats all equally, regardless of gender, age, race, culture, ability.
- Language in forms, documents is hard to understand.
- Staff are properly trained.
- Staff are overworked; can't give individual attention.
- Service is getting better.
- Service is good value for tax money.



In most instances, gender, education level, race, and physical/mental disability do not produce statistically significant differences in response. Opinion varies more frequently on the basis of age, region of the province, occupation, and family income.

The magnitude of the demographic differences tends to be small. Looking at the statement, "Improving service should save money", for example, there is a difference of 15 points on the 100-point scale between persons aged 18–24 and those over 65. This is among the largest of the demographic differences that occur across the ten opinion statements.

Service provides good value for taxpayers' money

The issue of value for money is central to Ontarians' perception of government services, and surfaces in a number of different contexts in the survey research. The demographic variation in response to this item of the survey is therefore described in detail.

In describing this variation, it is important to keep in mind that every demographic group within the Ontario population disagrees with the position that "Ontario Government service provides good value for money". The sentiment is universal, and the following description shows the degree to which groups differ in this assessment.

Four trends are statistically significant:

- **Region:** Residents of central and south-western Ontario perceive that Ontario Government service is poorer value than do residents of northern and south-eastern Ontario.
- **Age:** Younger people perceive poorer value in government service than older people (especially those over age 65).
- **Occupation:** Business managers/owners and trades/factory workers see poorer value in service than retired people and homemakers.
- **Income:** Higher income families perceive poorer value in government service than lower income families.

The view that improving service should save money is highly consistent across all groups; it differs only to a small degree among age groups, in that people over age 50 are somewhat more likely to hold the position than those under 50.

Service is getting more complicated

Support for this position is strongest among rural residents and people over the age of 50 (Table 3). Business owners/managers and retired people, two groups that find themselves at opposite ends of the opinion spectrum on many

Table 3 "Ontario Government service is good value for taxpayers' money" Ontario Public, 1991		
		Average Score (0 - 100)
Region	South-east	41
	North-east	40
	North-west	39
	Central	35
	South-west	34
Age	65+ years	47
	50-64	38
	35-49	35
	25-39	35
	18-24	32
Occupation	Retired	44
	Homemaker	40
	Professional	38
	Student	37
	Office worker	35
	Other	35
	Trades, factory	32
Income	Business manager, owner	30
	Less than \$10,000	40
	\$10,000-29,999	40
	\$30,000-49,999	36
	\$50,000-69,999	36
	\$70,000-89,999	37
	\$90,000 plus	33

issues in this survey, agree here that the complexity of service is increasing.

People in cities get better service than those in towns and rural areas

Forty-nine percent of respondents agreed with this statement overall. Residents of towns and rural areas supported this statement more than those who live in cities. Sixty-one percent of the non-urban group agreed, however, so did 45 percent of city dwellers.

As the urban population is concentrated in central Ontario, a similar difference occurs on the basis of region of the province: residents of central Ontario are least likely to agree that cities get better service, while residents of northern Ontario are most likely to agree.

Government treats all people equally, regardless of gender, age, race, culture, or ability

This is the single statement of the ten on which race is a statistically significant variable. Thirty-eight percent of racial minorities and 45 percent of others agree that the government treats all

people equally, while 45 percent of racial minorities and 34 percent of others disagree. Expressed on the 100-point scale, the average rating for minorities is slightly toward the "Disagree" end of the scale at 44 points; the average rating for others is slightly toward the "Agree" end at 53 points.

In addition, residents of Toronto and larger cities agree with this statement more so than residents of towns and rural areas.

These two results seem, at first look, to be contradictory. More minorities live in Toronto and larger cities than in smaller centres, so why should the large centres score high on the equality issue? In fact, race and size of community do not interact. Scores on "The government treats people equally" increase with size of community to the same degree among both minorities and others.

Language used in forms and documents is hard to understand

Agreement increases with the age of the respondent. Those with less education also agree more strongly.

Table 4 Sources of Information About Ontario Government Services Ontario Public, 1991			
Source	Are you aware of this source?	Have you used it in the past year? *	Satisfaction rating (0 - 100) **
Blue pages	98 %	89 %	58
Constituency office of MPP	79 %	24 %	57
Zenith and 1-800 numbers	66 %	69 %	72
Community Information Centres	39 %	45 %	68
Citizens' Inquiry Bureau, Access Ontario, Access London	13 %	33 %	68
KWIC Index of Ontario Government Services	16 %	50 %	64
Ontario Government Phone Book	35 %	52 %	64
Residents of Northern Ontario only:			
Ministry of Northern Development and Mines	76 %	25 %	74

* Base: Those who are aware of the source
** Base: Those who have used the source in the past year

Staff are overworked and cannot give customers individual attention

Students, professionals, and homemakers agree most strongly with this statement, while retired people join with business owners/managers in disagreeing most strongly.

Service is getting better

Business managers/owners and trades/factory workers disagree most vigorously with this position, assigning ratings of 37 and 38 respectively. Retired people and students are least critical, with ratings of 45 and 48 respectively.

1.4 Sources of Information about Ontario Government Services

The majority of respondents are aware of the first three sources of information about government in Table 4. Eighty-nine percent of respondents report using the Blue Pages in the past year, compared to 60 percent who used a toll-free telephone number and 22 percent who used a constituency office.

1.5 Knowledge of Government Services

Most Ontarians know which level of government provides major services. Seven services representing the three levels of government were listed in the questionnaire. For each one except birth certificates, more than 70 percent of respondents chose the correct level of government.

Twenty-seven percent of respondents achieved a perfect score of 7 correct; 79 percent had 5, 6, or 7 answers correct. At the other end of the scale, 3 percent got none or one answer correct.

This information is important, as it verifies that survey respondents are, by and large, describing their experience with and opinions of the Ontario Government, not some other level of government.

1.6 Use of the Four Service Businesses

Focus groups with both the Public and the OPS led to the definition of four direct service businesses that broadly encompass the services of the Ontario Government, and that are consistent with public understanding of service.

Table 5 Which Government Provides the Service? Ontario Public, 1991					
Service	Percent of Respondents				Total
	Municipal	Provincial	Federal	Not sure	
Workers' compensation	1	72	14	12	100%
Unemployment	1	23	71	4	100%
Birth certificates	7	58	31	3	100%
Immigration	<1	3	93	4	100%
Motor vehicle registration	5	91	2	2	100%
Landlord and tenant regulations	18	73	3	6	100%
Customs	1	4	91	5	100%

Note: Correct choice shown in bold

FOUR DIRECT SERVICE BUSINESSES

REGISTRATION	Licensing, permits, certificates	Examinations, testing	Registration
Examples are:	Fishing and hunting licences Lotteries and bingos Births, deaths, marriages Trades qualifications	Pesticide use Hunters' safety Apprenticeship programs Drivers' Licences	Land registry Company names Child care facilities Firearms registration
INFORMATION	Inquiry, Referral	Counselling	Public awareness
Examples are:	General inquiries Consumer complaints Employment inquiries Interpretation of legislation	Vocational rehabilitation Advice to small businesses Advice to industry Apprenticeship counselling	Environmental issues Social services Consumer information Safe driving campaigns
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	Grants, rebates	Financial assistance	Insurance claims
Examples are:	Northern travel grants Ontario Tax Credits Senior citizens' tax rebates Farm tax rebates Rent rebates	Family Benefits Allowance Guaranteed Annual Income Supplement for Seniors Loans to business Student loans Northern Ontario Heritage Fund	Workers' compensation OHIP Emergency measures claims Accidents on government property
ENFORCEMENT/ JUSTICE	Inspections, audits, investigations	Debt collection, recovery of overpayments	Justice
Examples are:	Construction inspections Vehicle inspections Natural resources enforcement Pollution monitoring Employment standards investigations	Student loans repayments Income maintenance overpayments Restitution and compensation Motor vehicle accident claims	Child custody Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Probation and parole Human rights

Table 6
Use of Four Service Businesses
Ontario Public, 1991

Service business	Percent of respondents who used service	Average satisfaction rating (0 - 100)
Registration	69 %	61
Information	44 %	55
Financial Assistance	49 %	62
Enforcement/Justice	24 %	53

The decision to use these broadly-defined service types avoids the study of specific Ministries or programs, and is in keeping with the mandate of this research. The four service types were defined in the questionnaire to ensure that respondents shared a common understanding.

The questionnaire made clear that only direct government services were being addressed; services delivered by third parties such as schools, hospitals and legal aid were not included in the survey.

Ninety-eight percent of respondents reported using one or more of the four generic services in the past year (Table 6).

- Registration services were used by the greatest proportion of respondents — 69 percent of the sample. Respondents were also asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the level of service provided to them, and Registration received a relatively high score of 61 on a scale of 0 to 100.
- Information services were used by 44 percent of the sample, and achieved a satisfaction score of 55.
- Financial Assistance services were used by 49 percent of the sample, and achieved a satisfaction score of 62.
- Enforcement/Justice services were used by 24 percent. The average satisfaction score was 52.

Satisfaction ratings for Registration and Financial Assistance services are significantly higher than those for Information and Enforcement/Justice.

The Public rate their satisfaction with each of the four generic services **higher** than they rate the quality of Ontario Government service in a global sense. Service in general received a score of just 45 out of 100. This result at first appears puzzling, given that the four service businesses cover the great majority of services offered to the Public — why should the sum of the parts differ from the whole? The explanation seems to be that people respond more positively to services that are more familiar and closer to their own experience. "Overall quality of service", when applied to an organization as large and diverse as the Ontario Government, is vague and non-specific, and may evoke a stereotyped image of "big government", while mention of a specific service area may recall a personal experience.

REGISTRATION SERVICES

Who uses Registration services?

Sixty-nine percent of respondents reported using Registration services of the Ontario Government in the preceding year (Table 7) Use of Registration services does not vary significantly as a function of the following four variables: region of the province, size of community (city, town, rural), race, and disability.

Use of Registration services does vary with:

- Age: Younger people, especially those under age 50, make much greater use of Registration services than older people.

Table 7
Percent of Respondents Using Registration Services
Ontario Public, 1991

		Used service in past year?	
		% No	% Yes
Age	18–24 years	29	71
	25–39	19	81
	35–49	23	77
	50–64	37	63
	65+	55	45
Gender	Female	38	62
	Male	22	78
Education	Some public or high	38	62
	Completed high school	32	68
	Some college, univ.	32	68
	Completed college, univ.	25	75
Occupation	Retired	49	51
	Homemaker	35	65
	Other	34	66
	Office worker	31	69
	Professional	24	76
	Student	22	78
	Business manager, owner	20	80
	Trades, factory	18	82
Income	Less than \$10,000	51	49
	\$10,000–29,999	41	59
	\$30,000–49,999	27	73
	\$50,000–69,999	22	78
	\$70,000–89,999	22	78
	\$90,000 plus	23	77

- **Gender:** Fewer women than men use Registration services.
- **Education:** Those who have completed college or university make greater use of Registration services than others.
- **Occupation:** Four occupational groups are more likely to have used services in the past year: trades/factory workers, business owners/managers, students, and professionals.
- **Income:** Families with incomes of less than \$30,000 are less likely to have used Registration services than those with higher incomes.

Satisfaction With Registration services

Satisfaction with Registration services is lowest among urban dwellers, and increases as the size of the respondent's community (Table 8). The difference between Toronto and rural areas is 7 points.

Satisfaction also increases with age (older respondents are more satisfied) and decreases with education (more educated respondents are less satisfied).

Table 8
Satisfaction With Registration Services
Ontario Public, 1991

		Average Rating (0 - 100)
Size of community	Toronto	58
	100,000 plus	58
	10,000 plus	62
	Small town, village	64
	Rural area	65
Age	18-24 years	57
	25-39	57
	35-49	60
	50-64	68
	65 +	72
Education	Some public or high	68
	Completed high school	62
	Some college, univ.	61
	Completed college, univ.	58
Occupation	Retired	70
	Other	66
	Homemaker	64
	Student	63
	Trades, factory	61
	Office worker	60
	Professional	59
	Business manager, owner	55
Frequency of use	Once in past year	63
	Two to five times	59
	Six or more times	68

Consistent with the age difference, retired people rate Registration services higher than other occupation groups. Business managers/owners and trades/factory workers score low in satisfaction, consistent with their low scores on more general measures of satisfaction, for example, overall quality of Ontario Government service.

Satisfaction also varies with frequency of use, but the trend is not linear.

INFORMATION SERVICES

Who uses Information services?

Forty-four percent of respondents had used Information services within the past year (Table 9). Use of Information services does not vary to a statistically significant degree across different areas of the province, between larger and smaller communities, gender, disability, or family income.

Use of Information services does vary on the basis of:

- Age: Those under age 50 use Information services more frequently; those over 50 less frequently.
- Education: Use of Information services increases with education.
- Racial minorities: Minorities make greater use of Information services than others.
- Occupation: Retired people use Information services much less often than others. This effect of occupational groups overlaps to some extent with the age effect.

Satisfaction with Information services

Satisfaction scores for Information services are remarkably consistent across different segments of the Ontario population: significant differences do not occur on the basis of any of the dimensions tested, including region of the province, urban-rural areas, gender, race, physical/mental disability, education, occupation, and family income.

People who use Information services more or less frequently do not vary to a statistically significant degree in their satisfaction with the services.

Table 9 Percent of Respondents Using Information Services Ontario Public, 1991			
		Used service in past year?	
		% No	% Yes
Age	18–24 years	43	57
	25–39	51	49
	35–49	50	50
	50–64	62	38
	65+	77	23
Education	Some public or high	68	32
	Completed high school	55	45
	Some college, university	56	44
	Completed college, university	50	50
Racial minorities	Minorities	46	54
	Others	57	43
Occupation	Retired	73	27
	Office worker	55	45
	Professional	53	47
	Homemaker	53	47
	Other	51	49
	Business manager, owner	50	50
	Trades, factory	49	51
	Student	46	54

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

Who uses Financial Assistance services?

Forty-nine percent of respondents reported using Financial Assistance services in the preceding year. Factors that significantly affect use of Financial Assistance services are (Table 10):

- Size of community: Those in rural areas make greater use of Financial Assistance services than others.
- Age: Those aged 18-24 are most likely to use Financial Assistance services.
- Gender: More women than men use Financial Assistance services.
- Disability: Those with disabilities are more likely to use Financial Assistance services than others.
- Occupation: Students, homemakers, and those with "other" occupations make greatest use of Financial Assistance services.
- Income: Families with higher incomes make less use of Financial Assistance services.

Table 10
Percent of Respondents Using Financial Assistance Services
Ontario Public, 1991

		Used service in past year?	
		% No	% Yes
Size of community	Cities, towns	52	48
	Rural	40	60
Age	18-24 years	39	61
	25-39	47	53
	35-49	54	46
	50-64	59	41
	65+	50	50
Gender	Female	47	53
	Male	54	46
Disability	Disabled	36	64
	Non-disabled	52	48
Occupation	Business manager, owner	61	39
	Professional	55	45
	Office worker	53	47
	Trades, factory	53	47
	Retired	52	48
	Other	42	58
	Homemaker	39	61
	Student	39	61
Income	Less than \$10,000	30	70
	\$10,000-29,999	44	56
	\$30,000-49,999	49	51
	\$50,000-69,999	53	47
	\$70,000-89,999	62	38
	\$90,000 plus	67	33

Satisfaction with Financial Assistance Services

Satisfaction with Financial Assistance services increases with age to peak at 79 points out of 100 among the 65-and-over group (Table 11).

Occupational differences show the familiar pattern of greatest satisfaction among retirees and homemakers, least satisfaction among business managers/owners.

Those who use Financial Assistance services more frequently are clearly more satisfied with the service than others.

Variables affecting use of this service are (Table 12):

- Age: Persons under age 50 make more use of Enforcement/Justice services than older people.
- Education: Use of Enforcement/Justice services increases with education.
- Occupation: Retired people use Enforcement/Justice services considerably less than other groups.

Use of these services does not vary to a statistically significant degree with region of the province, size of community, gender, race, disability, or income.

Table 11 Satisfaction With Financial Services Ontario Public, 1991		
		Average rating (0 - 100)
Age	18-24 years	60
	25-39	56
	35-49	58
	50-64	63
	65 +	79
Occupation	Retired	75
	Homemaker	72
	Professional	60
	Other	60
	Student	58
	Trades, factory	58
	Office worker	53
	Business manager, owner	52
Frequency of use	Once in past year	56
	Two to five times	63
	Six or more times	73

ENFORCEMENT/JUSTICE SERVICES

Who uses Enforcement/Justice services?

In all, 24 percent of respondents reported using Enforcement/Justice services in the preceding year.

Satisfaction with Enforcement / Justice services

Enforcement/Justice services have just one differentiating demographic dimension — a clear difference in satisfaction between Toronto (score of 41 out of 100) and other parts of the

province (average score of 55 out of 100). The survey does not provide a reason for this difference. Those who are most frequently involved

with Enforcement/Justice service are least satisfied with the service (Table 13).

Table 12 Percent of Respondents Using Enforcement/Justice Services Ontario Public, 1991			
		Used service in past year?	
		% No	% Yes
Age	18-24 years	67	33
	25-39	68	32
	35-49	72	28
	50-64	83	17
	65+	95	5
Education	Some public or high	85	15
	Completed high school	79	21
	Some college, univ.	75	25
	Completed college, university	71	29
Occupation	Retired	92	8
	Office worker	79	21
	Student	77	23
	Business manager, owner	76	24
	Professional	71	29
	Other	69	31
	Trades, factory	68	32
	Homemaker	68	32

Table 13 Satisfaction With Enforcement/Justice Services Ontario Public, 1991		
		Average rating (0 - 100)
Size of community	Toronto	41
	100,000 plus	55
	10,000 plus	53
	Small town, village	54
	Rural area	56
Frequency of use	Once in past year	56
	Two to five times	52
	Six or more times	39

1.7 Elements of Good Service Based on a Specific Service Experience

Focus groups were held with both members of the Public and OPS staff to define the most important dimensions of good service. A list of 17 service elements was developed and tested; these 17 elements appeared in both the Public and OPS surveys.

Respondents in the Public survey described a specific service that they had recently received in terms of the 17 service elements. Respondents were asked to rate, first, their sense of the importance of each element, and second, the performance of the OPS in delivering the service.

The more than 2,000 Public respondents described a broad range of services, including those of most major programs and ministries of the Ontario Government. Most respondents, 75 percent, described services that were for purely personal rather than business reasons, and 57 percent perceived the service as a legal requirement. Ten percent described services that they sought in an emergency situation. People received these services in a variety of ways: the largest group visited an Ontario Government office, while others received service by mail, telephone, on-site visits, and connections to Government computers. The sum of all these specific service experiences appears to amply represent the range of services that the Ontario Government provides.

Table 14
Importance of Service Elements
Ontario Public, 1991

Element	Importance to customer
I got accurate information	84
Staff were knowledgeable and competent	83
I got what I needed in a reasonable time	82
Staff understood my needs fully	82
Staff gave direct, straight answers	82
Procedures were easy to understand	82
I got a quick response to my request	82
Staff communicated clearly and were easy to talk to	82
The office was in convenient location	81
Staff were courteous and helpful	80
The service was there when I needed it	80
It was easy to get to the right person	79
The service was good value for my tax dollar	79
My confidentiality was protected	77
I got consistent information from different people	76
The office was designed with my needs in mind	74
Staff took pride in their work	71
Average	79

0 = Not at all important 100 = Extremely important

IMPORTANCE

All 17 service elements score very highly in importance. The highest-ranked elements indicate that customers want accurate information in a reasonable time from competent staff.

Customers are focused on solving their problems efficiently; it is somewhat less important to them that staff take pride in their work or that the office environment is designed around their needs.

PERFORMANCE

With the exception of "My confidentiality was protected", performance ratings are lower than importance ratings. Performance ratings average 64 out of 100; importance ratings average 79 out of 100.

IMPORTANCE-PERFORMANCE GAPS

The gap between importance and performance ratings is simply the difference between them. For just one service element, "My confidentiality was protected", there is not a gap but a match — performance and importance are essentially the same.

Gaps exist for the other 16 service elements: on each, there is a statistically significant difference between importance and performance. For each of these elements, the importance score is higher than the performance score. In other words, the Ontario Public perceives that the Government's performance in providing service is lower than the importance that customers attach to good service.

A large gap, having a size of 23 points, occurs for the element, "The service was good value for taxpayers' money". Both here, with regard to

Table 15 Ontario Government Performance on Service Elements Ontario Public, 1991	
Element	Performance of OPS
My confidentiality was protected	78
The office was in a convenient location	68
Staff understood my needs fully	68
I got accurate information	68
Procedures were easy to understand	67
Staff gave direct, straight answers	66
Staff were knowledgeable and competent	66
Staff communicated clearly and were easy to talk to	65
Staff were courteous and helpful	65
It was easy to get to the right person	62
I got consistent information from different people	62
The service was there when I needed it	61
The office was designed with my needs in mind	60
I got a quick response to my request	60
I got what I needed in a reasonable time	59
Staff took pride in their work	58
The service was good value for my tax dollar	56
Average	64

0 = Extremely poor performance 100 = Extremely good performance

Table 16
Gaps and Matches on Service Elements
Ontario Public, 1991

Element	Difference between importance and performance
Match	
1. My confidentiality was protected	1
Gaps	
2. The office was in a convenient location	13
3. Staff took pride in their work	14
4. The office was designed with my needs in mind	14
5. I got consistent information from different people	14
6. Procedures were easy to understand	15
7. Staff understood my needs fully	15
8. Staff were courteous and helpful	15
9. I got accurate information	16
10. Staff gave direct, straight answers	16
11. Staff communicated clearly, were easy to talk to	16
12. It was easy to get to the right person	17
13. Staff were knowledgeable and competent	17
14. The service was there when I needed it	19
15. I got a quick response to my request	22
16. The service was good value for my tax dollar	23
17. I got what I needed in a reasonable time	23
Average difference	16

Note: Numbers at left refer to points on Figure 3

a specific service, and in the context of global opinions of the Ontario Government, a concern about failing to get good value for money is paramount.

Large gaps also occur for a trio of elements describing timely service, “I got what I needed in a reasonable period of time”, “I received a quick response to my request”, and “The service was there when I needed it”.

**Importance-performance gaps
and matches**

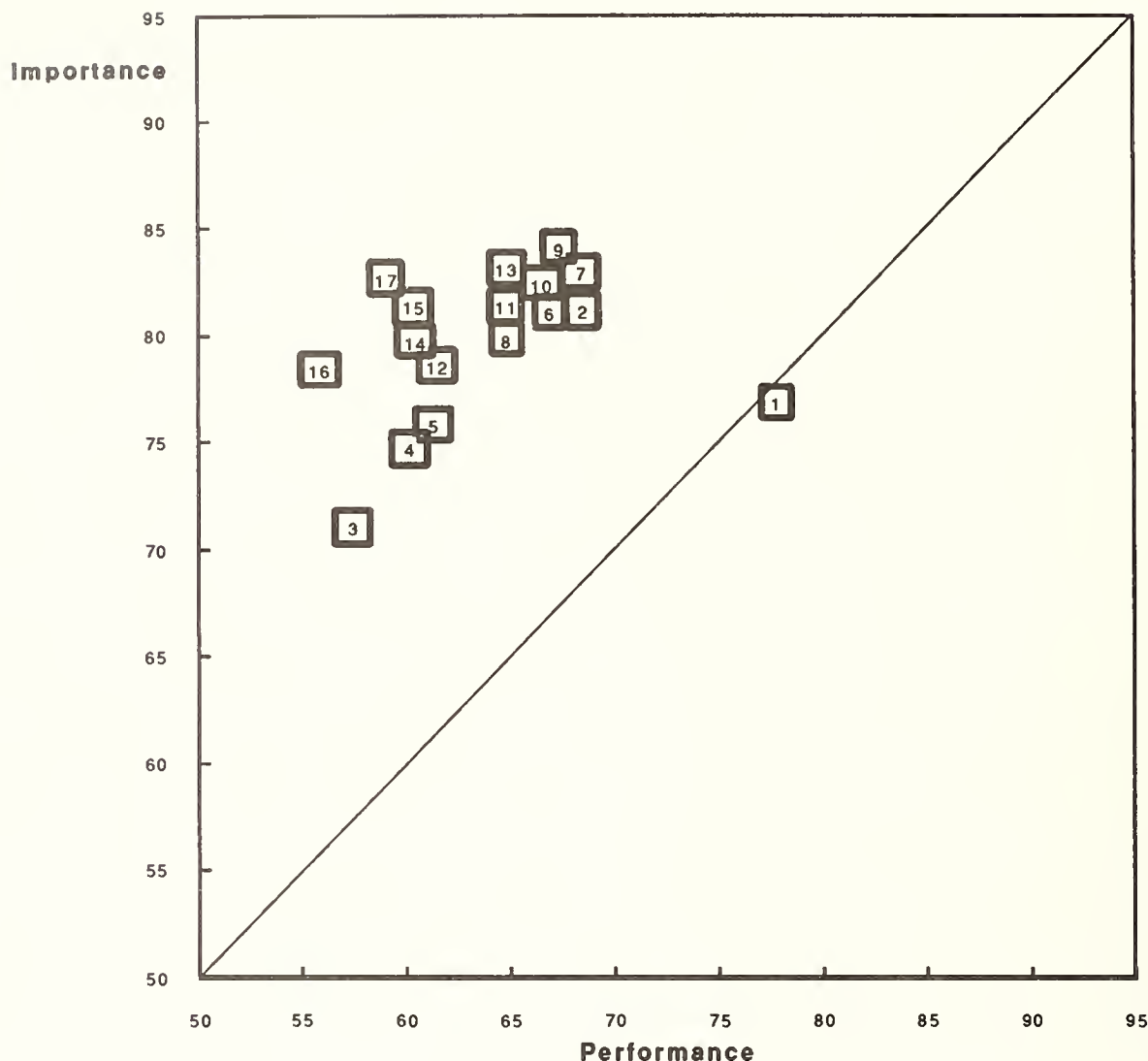
The single match on the confidentiality dimension stands out in Figure 3; it is the point lying directly on the diagonal line.

For the 16 other items, importance exceeds performance. Larger gaps denote greater discrepancies between performance and importance. Distance from the diagonal line shows the magnitude of the gap — thus “I got what I needed in a reasonable period of time”, point number 17, is farther from the diagonal than “The office is in a convenient location”, point number 4.

**How typical are the services that
respondents chose?**

The importance-performance gap derives from the specific service experiences that respondents chose to describe, but what kinds of experiences were these? If most people chose an experience that had left them angry and frustrat-

Figure 3
Importance and Performance Ratings for 17 Service Elements
Ontario Public, 1991



ed with the Ontario Government, they would likely rate Government performance low, and large importance-performance gaps would result. The average gap of 16 points would then represent a critical, but not a typical, perception of government service.

It is important to know then whether the experiences people described were typical or atypical of service in general. To test this, people's satisfaction scores for the four service businesses were compared with their ratings of performance on the specific service they described. A positive correlation between ratings of the spe-

cific service and services in general would indicate that people tended to choose a typical service experience to rate the service elements. (A small positive correlation or a negative correlation would indicate that people described atypical experiences).

In fact, the correlations are strongly positive, indicating that on average, people described a typical experience in each of the four service areas (Table 17).

It is also possible that respondents chose uncharacteristically good experiences to describe. This

Table 17 How Typical Are the Services That Respondents Chose? Ontario Public, 1991		
Type of Service	Satisfaction with service in general and performance on specific service	
	Correlation	
Information	.54	
Registration	.62	
Financial Assistance	.75	
Enforcement/Justice	.76	

appears very unlikely, given that the great majority of written comments about government services on the questionnaires contained either critical comments or suggestions for improvement.

How Big a Gap is “Big”?

In practical terms, it is important to ask, “How large a gap (if any) can exist before customers become dissatisfied?” The question can be answered by assessing gap size at different levels of customer satisfaction. “Satisfaction” was measured for each of the four major service businesses, and gap size is plotted in Figure 4 for each service business. The four plots show highly similar patterns.

Within each service business, customers who said they were very satisfied with the service perceived a gap of zero or close to zero between importance and performance (the right-most column in each chart, Figure 4). As customers become increasingly less satisfied with the service, they perceive increasingly larger gaps; those who describe themselves as not at all satisfied see gaps of more than 40 points in each service business.

“Satisfied customers” are, by definition, those who rate satisfaction at 5, 6, or 7 — higher than the neutral rating of 4 (Figure 4). For Registration services, the gap that differentiates “satisfied” and “not-satisfied” customers is somewhere

between 8 and 18 points. For present purposes, a gap of 13 points (halfway between 8 and 18) is taken to represent the threshold that separates satisfied and not-satisfied customers.

In like manner, thresholds for the other service businesses are:

- 15 points for Information services
- 17 points for Financial Assistance services
- 11 points for Enforcement/Justice services

Threshold of Satisfaction Based on Performance

Satisfaction thresholds can be defined on the basis of performance alone, as well as on the basis of importance-performance gaps. With the present survey data, the two methods provide similar results. The relationship between performance and satisfaction is shown for Registration services in Figure 5. The threshold is a performance rating of 65, midway between the neutral satisfaction rating of 4 on the satisfaction scale and the first satisfied rating of 5 points.

Using performance alone as the criterion, thresholds for the other three service businesses are:

- 65 points for Information services
- 62 points for Financial Assistance services
- 64 points for Enforcement/Justice services

Figure 4
Satisfaction as a Function of Importance-Performance Gap
(Gap Sizes In Points)
 Ontario Public, 1991

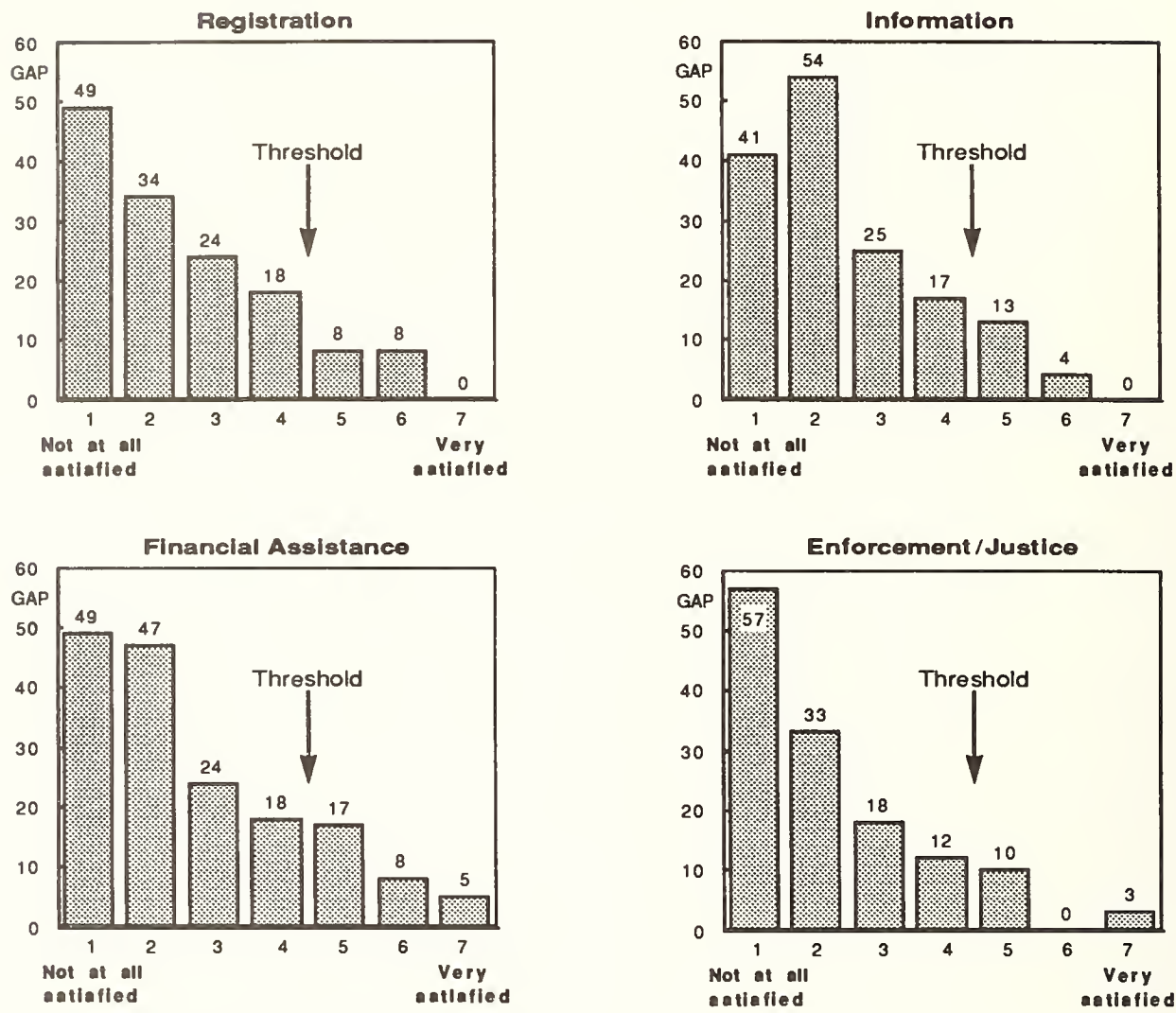
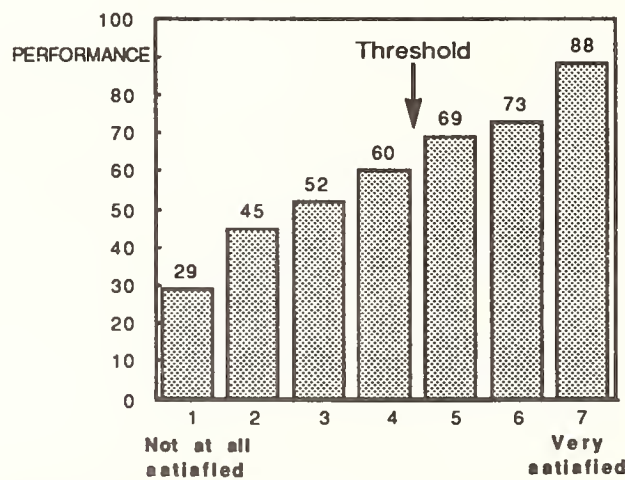


Figure 5
Threshold of Satisfaction Based on Performance Ratings:
Registration Services
 Ontario Public, 1991



THE CONTEXT IN WHICH SERVICE IS RECEIVED AFFECTS PERCEPTIONS

The conditions under which people use government services have a considerable bearing on their assessment of OPS performance. These conditions include, for example, the duration of the service experience, whether service is sought for business or personal reasons, and the mode of service delivery (e.g., mail, telephone). While these conditions affect perceptions of **performance** to varying degrees, they have little or no effect on the **importance** that people assign to the elements of service quality.

Number of contacts and length of time to complete service

The length of time taken to complete the service and the number of separate contacts required to get the service have a profound effect on people's perception of Government performance (Figure 6). The longer the time and the greater the number of contacts, the worse the experience is. Unfortunately, the data do not supply the reason for the protracted nature of

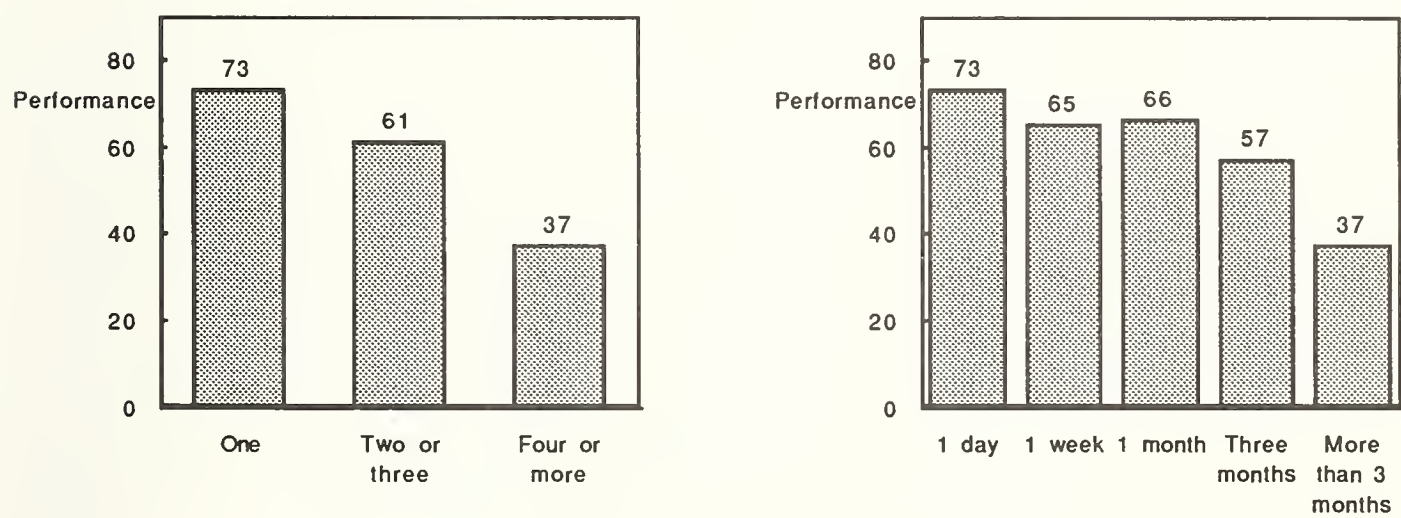
the service experience. In some cases, it is likely that very complex problems are the issue; in others, a simple matter may have gone awry.

Those whose experience is short is also sweet. **Those who get what they need in one contact or in one day's activity hold very positive views of performance** (compare the score of 73 for these groups with the score of 72 that banks and trust companies achieved for overall quality of service).

Prolonged service delivery is the greatest factor underlying customer dissatisfaction. The effects of prolonged delivery are consistent across all four service businesses. They are not modified to a significant degree by demographic variables including age, gender, occupation, region of the province, education, race, or disability.

The two variables, number of contacts with government and total length of service experience, clearly overlap — more contacts implies more time to complete. Taken alone, number of contacts accounts for 24 percent of the variance in performance scores, and time to complete the experience accounts for 22 percent. Combined, the two account for 29 percent of the variation in performance scores.

Figure 6
Number of Contacts and Duration of Experience Affect Performance Scores
Ontario Public, 1991



These figures are impressive, in light of the fact that demographic effects on performance (age, education, and so on) account for proportions of variance of 5 percent or less. These two variables are by far the most important determinants of the Public's perceptions of Ontario Government performance.

Prolonged service delivery and gap size

Respondents can be divided into three groups on the basis of the match or gap they perceive between overall importance and performance.

- **Group 1: Importance-performance match, or positive value**

This group perceives either an exact match between importance and performance (i.e., a gap of zero points) or a modest positive value (i.e., performance exceeds importance). This group comprises one-quarter of respondents; on average, it rates performance 10 points higher than importance.

- **Group 2: Small negative gap**

For one-half of respondents, importance exceeds performance by 25 points or less. On average, importance exceeds performance by 8 points.

- **Group 3: Large negative gap**

Importance exceeds performance by more than 25 points. The average gap is 53 points. One-quarter of Public respondents fall into this group.

As shown in Figure 7, 69 percent of Group 1 customers got what they needed in one contact with the government; only 4 percent of Group 1 customers made 4 or more contacts to get the service. At the other extreme, 35 percent of the Group 3 customers made 4 or more contacts.

An important point to note is that customers who had more contacts with government are **not** more demanding than others with respect to expectations such as how long they should stand in a line or how many government staff they should have to deal with. Their dissatisfaction does not appear, therefore, to result from unreasonable expectations.

Personal and business use

Seventy-five percent of respondents described services they used for personal reasons. These people rated service significantly higher, on average, than either the 12 percent who described business-related service or the 13 percent who

Figure 7
Number of Contacts and Size of Importance-Performance Gap
Ontario Public, 1991

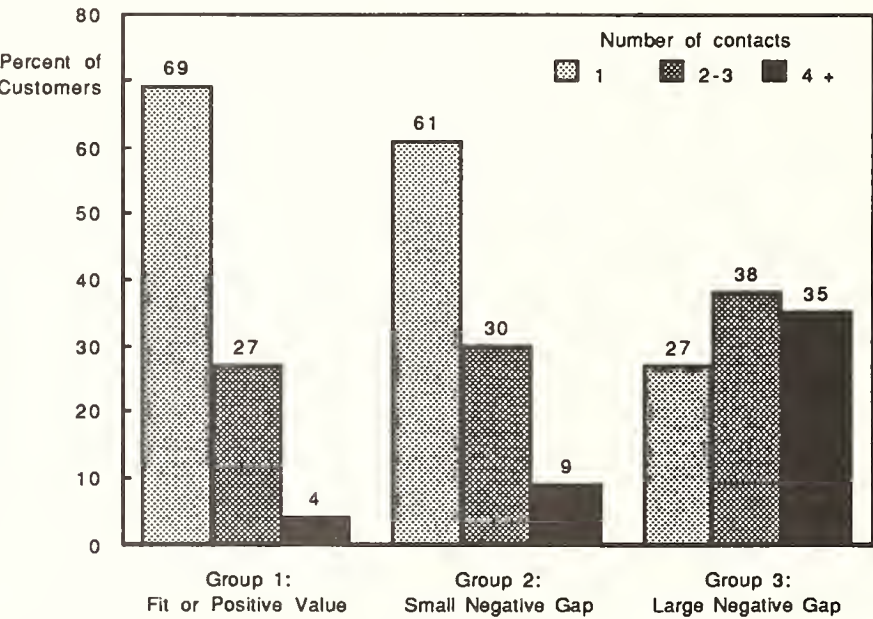


Table 18
Legally Required Services
Ontario Public, 1991

Reason for use		Average performance rating (0 - 100)
Personal or business use?	Personal	66
	Business	57
	Both	59
Was it a legal requirement?		
• Registration	Yes	68
	No	60
	Not sure	47
• Information, Financial Assistance, Enforcement/Justice	Yes	60
	No	63
	Not sure	56

described services that pertained to both personal and business use.

Legally required services

The majority of respondents, 57 percent, considered the service they received to be a legal requirement; 36 percent did not see the service as legally required and 7 percent were not sure.

For Registration services, those who perceived the service as a legal requirement rated performance significantly **higher** than others (Table 18).

For Information, Financial Assistance, and Enforcement/Justice services, this difference did not occur; in fact those who perceived the service as a legal requirement rated performance slightly **lower** than those who did not.

About 6 percent of respondents are uncertain as to the legal status of their service. These rated performance low in each type of service. The reason is not clear.

Emergency situations

Emergency situations account for ten percent of the total that respondents described. In the areas of Registration and Information services, emergency situations received significantly lower performance scores than non-emergencies (Table 19).

In Financial Assistance and Enforcement/Justice, emergency situations received performance scores very similar to non-emergencies; they do not differ to a statistically significant degree.

Mode of delivery

Visits to government offices were the most frequently described type of contact. Forty-two percent of respondents described this form of contact: 26 percent described mail, 25 percent described telephone, and 4 percent described on-site visits by government representatives. On-line computer contact and fax contacts were too infrequent to allow statistical analysis.

Table 19
Emergency Situations and Mode of Delivery
Ontario Public, 1991

Reason for use		Average performance rating (0 - 100)
Was it an emergency?		
• Registration, Information	Yes	52
	No	66
• Financial Assistance, Enforcement/Justice	Yes	62
	No	60
How did you receive the service?	Visited government office	67
	Government rep visited customer	63
	By mail	58
	By phone	56

Table 20
Demographic Variables Affecting Importance Scores
Ontario Public, 1991

		Average rating (0 - 100)
Gender	Female	81
	Male	77
Disability	Persons with disabilities	74
	Persons without	80

Service delivery that involves face-to-face contact — visits to government offices and visits by government representatives to customers — receive relatively high performance scores.

Mail and phone services are similar, scoring significantly below personal visits and on-line computer services.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF IMPORTANCE AND PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Importance

When rating the importance of service elements, just two variables produce consistent effects. As neither of these variables produced significant effects with regard to other aspects of Ontario Government service, their appearance here is perhaps surprising (Table 20).

Table 21
Demographic Variables Affecting Performance Scores
 Ontario Public, 1991

		Average rating (0 - 100)
Size of Community	Toronto	61
	100,000 +	63
	10,000 +	65
	Town	65
	Rural	66
Age	18-24 years	62
	25-39	60
	35-49	61
	50-64	68
	65 +	74
Education	Some public or high	70
	Completed high school	65
	Some college, university	63
	Completed college, university	61
Occupation	Retired	73
	Homemaker	69
	Trades, factory	65
	Other	64
	Office worker	63
	Student	63
	Professional	61
	Business manager, owner	56
Income	Less than \$10,000	67
	\$10,000-29,999	67
	\$30,000-49,999	64
	\$50,000-69,999	61
	\$70,000-89,999	58
	\$90,000 plus	62

- Gender: First, women rate importance higher than men by an average of 4 points (Average importance scores are 77 for men and 81 for women).
- Disability: Second, people with disabilities rate the importance of the service elements lower than those without. The difference here is 6 points (means importance ratings of 74 and 80 respectively).

Neither the gender difference nor the disability difference are linked to identifiable causes such as the use of service in emergency versus non-emergency situations, use of service for business or personal reasons, or seeking services that are legal requirements versus not. The differences are also independent of other demographic variables such as age, occupation, income, and education.

Performance

Five demographic variables that exerted an influence on global opinions of Government also affect perceptions of Government performance in service delivery (Table 21). Performance ratings tend to increase in smaller communities and among older respondents; they decrease among those with more schooling and higher income. Among occupational groups, retired people give the highest scores on performance; business managers/owners the lowest.

Importance-Performance Gaps

The size of the importance-performance gap varies on the basis of several dimensions (Table 22).

- Region: Residents of central and south-western Ontario perceive larger gaps than residents of northern and south-eastern Ontario.
- Age: Younger people perceive larger gaps than older people.
- Race: Racial minorities perceive larger gaps than others. This effect is the smallest of the five, with a spread of just 6 points between the two groups.
- Education: People with more schooling perceive larger gaps than those with less.
- Occupation: Business managers/owners perceive the largest gap of all occupational groups, retired people the smallest.

Gender, size of community, physical/mental disability, and family income do not affect gap size to a statistically significant degree.

Table 22 Demographic Influences on Gap Size Ontario Public, 1991		
		Gap size
Region	Central	19
	South-west	15
	North-west	14
	North-east	13
	South-east	12
Age	18-24 years	20
	25-39	19
	35-49	18
	50-64	12
	65+	5
Race	Racial minority	21
	Other	15
Education	Completed college, univ.	19
	Some college, univ.	16
	Completed high school	15
	Some public or high	7
Occupation	Business manager, owner	25
	Professional	19
	Student	18
	Office worker	16
	Trades, factory	14
	Other	14
	Homemaker	11
	Retired	7

1.8 What Would Make Service Better in Your Community?

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Three-quarters of respondents believe that they should be able to take public transit to Ontario Government offices. The proportion varies widely on the basis of the availability of public transit in the community; 97 percent of Toronto residents say public transit should be available, but, predictably, fewer than one-third of rural residents share this opinion.

PARKING

There is little consensus as to whether the government should provide free parking for its customers. The largest group, 42 percent, believes that government need not provide parking at all. The remainder are evenly divided between those who think the government should provide free parking (29 percent) and those who think it should provide parking at a "reasonable rate" (29 percent).

There is some regional variation in response, apparently based on the expected cost of parking in the community. Residents of large cities are somewhat more prepared to pay for parking, while residents of towns and rural areas tend to expect free parking.

SERVICE IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH AND FRENCH

A slight majority of Ontarians, 57 percent, state that the Government should provide services to the Public in English and French only.

The remaining 43 percent favour other-language services in some circumstances. The proportion of respondents who support translation in three specific areas appears in Table 23.

Support for any type of other-language service is higher in Toronto (52 percent in favour) than elsewhere (41 percent in favour). Support is dramatically higher among women (52 percent in favour) than among men (33 percent), and among racial minorities (52 percent in favour) than others (42 percent).

In addition, there are occupational differences, with support relatively high among professionals, office workers, homemakers, and students, and low among business managers, trades people, factory workers, and retired people. Support for other-language service stands at 50 percent among those aged 18-24, and decreases steadily to 35 percent among those over age 65.

Support for other-language services does not vary significantly as a function of income or education.

Table 23
Support for Other-Language Translation in Three Areas
Ontario Public, 1991

	Percent in favour
Publications	24 %
Telephone services	26 %
Counter services	28 %

GOVERNMENT OFFICE HOURS

Three-quarters of respondents would like to see office hours extended beyond the usual 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM Government schedule. Although a majority of all demographic groups are in favour of extended hours, the desire is stronger among:

- Residents of large cities (over 100,000 population)
- Younger people
- Men
- Those with less education
- Business managers/owners, tradespeople, factory workers, and students

Respondents chose among three options for extended hours as shown in Figure 8. Evening hours are preferred over Saturdays, with both evenings and Saturdays a strong second choice.

A companion question asked whether a tradeoff was acceptable: if office hours are extended to evenings or Saturdays, can normal hours be reduced? (See Table 24.)

AUTOMATED SERVICES

While most Ontarians are familiar with automated banking machines, the idea of receiving Government services in this way is probably new to most people.

Support for Government services provided via automated machines is strongly related to age: 50 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds are in favour, compared to just 10 percent of those over 65. Support also increases with the educational level of the respondent. Automated service is more acceptable in larger cities (42 percent in favour) than in smaller centres (28 percent in favour).

The large proportion of "undecided" responses might have been reduced had the survey described specific services that could be offered in this way (Figure 9).

ON-LINE COMPUTER SERVICES

Should the Ontario Government make its on-line computer services available to the Public? Overall, 40 percent favour the Government

Figure 8
Should Office Hours Be Extended?
Ontario Public, 1991

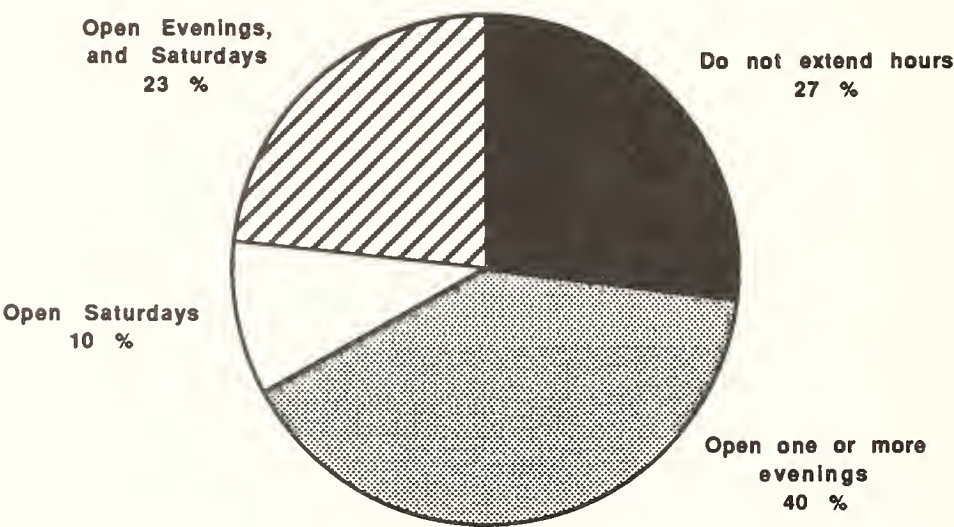


Table 24
Trade-off In Hours of Service
Ontario Public, 1991

Can normal hours be reduced, if service is extended to evenings or Saturdays?	Percent
No, extended hours must be in addition to present hours	43 %
Yes, offices could open later some mornings	44 %
Yes, offices could close one weekday	13 %
Total	100 %

making on-line computer services available, 32 percent have no opinion, and 29 percent are opposed (note that this figure is smaller than the 42 percent opposed to automated service).

Respondents' position regarding on-line computer services tends to coincide with their position on automated service delivery; those who favour one tend to favour the other. As well, demographic differences for on-line services mirror those for automated services: on-line access receives its most enthusiastic support from younger people, better educated people, and

residents of larger cities. Among occupational groups, professionals, business managers/owners, and students are most in favour.

ONE-STOP CENTRE FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES

The idea of one-stop centres implies an integration of services around particular customer needs, not necessarily placing all Government services in a single physical location. One-stop centres might take different forms for

Figure 9
Support for Automated Services
Ontario Public, 1991

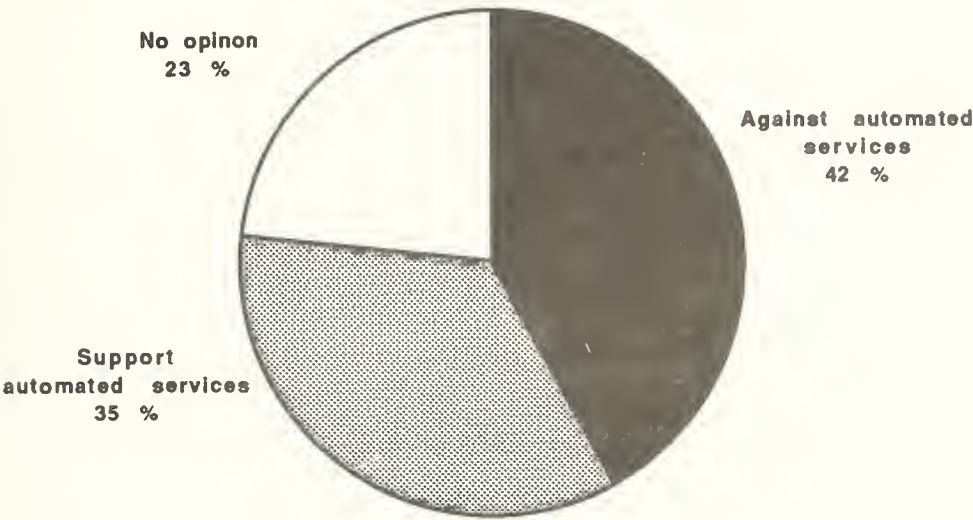
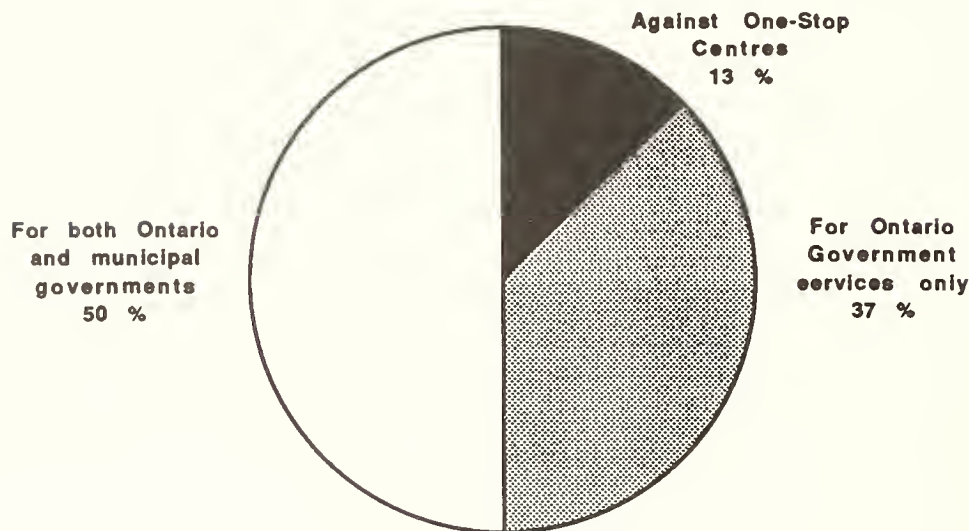


Figure 10
Support for One-Stop Government Centres
 Percent of Ontario Public, 1991



business, professional, and consumer groups. With 87 percent in favour of one-stop service, it is clear that Ontarians would support moves in this direction (Figure 10). A full 50 percent of respondents would like to see municipal and provincial services housed in the same facility. Support for one-stop service is consistently high across all demographic groups.

1.9 Franco-Ontarian Views

COMPOSITION OF FRANCOPHONE SAMPLE

To ensure Francophone participation in the Public survey, a sample of 500 Francophones was identified by the Ontario Government's Office of Francophone Affairs. This group received French-language copies of the questionnaire. Their response rate of 34 percent is higher than the 21 percent response rate achieved in the randomly distributed English-language version of the Public questionnaire. Before commenting on any Anglophone/Francophone differences in opinion, it is important to ascertain that the two samples bear direct comparison. The following tests establish that they do.

Francophone respondents in the database come from two sources:

- Persons selected by the Office of Francophone Affairs.
- Persons who responded to the randomly distributed English-language questionnaire and who identified their first language as French.

These two groups respond to survey questions in a very similar manner. Consider the question, "How good is the overall quality of service you get from the Ontario Government?" Anglophones rated government performance at 44 out of 100, compared to 56 for Francophones in the random sample and 55 for Francophones identified by the Office of Francophone Affairs. Comparisons across the spectrum of survey items yielded similar results. Wherever there were statistically significant differences in Anglophone and Francophone opinion, Francophones from both sources were very similar to each other, as well as different from the Anglophones.

The data is therefore consistent with the view that Franco-Ontarian respondents originating with the Office of Francophone Affairs are representative of those in the population at large, and the two groups of Francophones are combined in following analyses. One caveat to note is that the number of Francophones in the random

sample, 28, is relatively small for this purpose. A larger group of Francophones in the general sample would have provided a stronger test.

Similarity of Francophone and Anglophone samples

Differences between Anglophones and Francophones occur on three demographic variables. First, two-thirds of the Franco-Ontarians in the sample live in eastern and north-eastern Ontario, compared to just one-quarter of the Anglophone population. This is the strongest demographic difference between the two groups, and is consistent with the distribution of the Franco-Ontarian population. As discussed later in this chapter, differences in the regional distribution of Anglophones and Francophones contribute to certain of the differences in opinion between these groups.

In addition, significantly more members of the Francophone sample have post-secondary education, and more describe their occupation as "professional". These differences also contribute to certain Anglophone/Francophone differences on survey items. Their effect is discussed where relevant.

Anglophone and Francophone groups do not differ to a statistically significant degree with respect to other demographic variables, namely age, gender, race, disability, family income, or

paid employment status. The two groups were also compared on their knowledge of the services provided by federal, provincial, and municipal governments. Their scores do not differ significantly.

Because the Anglophone and Francophone samples are known to differ with respect to regional distribution, education and occupation, the contribution of these variables to each of the results reported in this section was assessed. Each reported difference between Anglophones and Francophones is independent of the effects of region, occupation, and education.

OVERALL QUALITY OF SERVICE

Francophones and Anglophones make very similar assessments of the quality of service provided by private-sector organizations. Francophones, however, are significantly more positive than Anglophones in their assessment of the Ontario and federal governments (Table 25).

Data presented in the following sections reinforces the conclusion that Francophones have the more positive view of the Ontario Government **in general terms**. On the other hand, the data also shows that when Anglophones and Francophones describe **specific services** they receive from the Ontario Government, their assessment does not differ.

Table 25 Overall Quality of Service Francophones and Anglophones in the Ontario Public, 1991		
	Average Score (0 - 100)	
	Francophone	Anglophone
Your bank or trust company	71	72
A supermarket you go to	69	71
A department store you go to	63	61
Your municipal government	60	55
Ontario Government *	55	44
Canada Post	54	48
Federal government *	46	35

* Statistically significant difference

This appears contradictory: why should Francophones hold a more positive image of the Ontario Government than Anglophones, but not assess their actual experience with Government services differently from Anglophones?

A possible explanation is that recent Ontario Government initiatives to improve services to Francophones are responsible for Franco-Ontarians' more positive image of the Government.

If this is true, it suggests that perceptions of government are amenable to change, and raises the possibility that improvements in customer service will also positively affect Anglophone opinion.

GLOBAL OPINIONS OF ONTARIO GOVERNMENT SERVICE

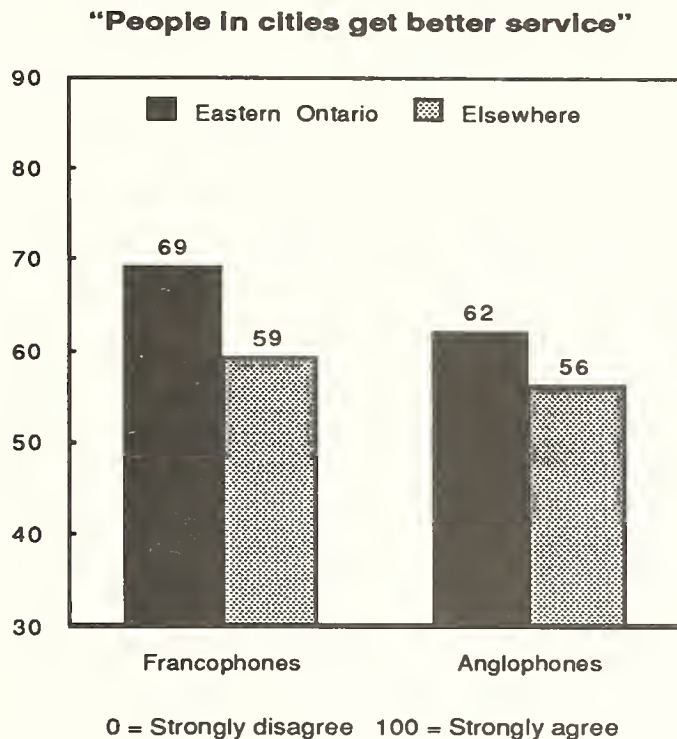
Anglophones and Francophones both agree with the statement, "Improving service to the Public should save money", more strongly than with any other statement. As well, both groups disagree most strongly with "Service is good value for taxpayers' money". While both groups agree that these issues rank highest and lowest of the ten, they diverge to a considerable degree in response to other statements. The following points are important to note in comparing the two groups' opinions:

- In each of the six instances where the groups differ to a statistically significant degree, Francophones have a more positive opinion of Ontario Government services than do Anglophones.
- The idea that government service is increasingly more complex evokes strong agreement from Anglophones, but a more neutral response from Francophones (scores of 70 and 57 respectively). The less negative response of Francophones may stem from the fact that in recent years, the Ontario Government has made French language services more available. Even if Government service is becoming more complicated in some ways, obtaining service in French may make it easier for Francophones.
- The two groups differ in the direction of their opinion on just one statement: Francophones tend to agree with the idea that "Service is getting better", while Anglophones tend to disagree (scores of 57 and 40 respectively).
- Finally, the difference in response to "People in cities get better service than do people in towns and rural areas" results in part from the regional difference in the Anglophone and Francophone populations. Additional analysis of this point follows.

Table 26 Opinions of Ontario Government Service Francophones and Anglophones in the Ontario Public, 1991		
	Average Score (0 - 100)	
	Franco- phone	Anglo- phone
Improving the quality of service to the Public should save money	72	71
People in cities get better service than do people in towns and rural areas *	66	57
Overall, the service of the Ontario Government is getting better *	57	40
Ontario Government service keeps getting more complicated *	56	70
The Ontario Government treats people equally, regardless of gender, age, race, culture, or ability	56	51
It often seems that regulations and policies are not applied consistently *	53	60
Staff are overworked and cannot give customers individual attention *	51	43
Staff dealing directly with the Public are properly trained and qualified	51	47
The language used in forms and documents is hard to understand	50	52
Ontario Government service provides good value for the taxpayers' money *	48	35

* Statistically significant difference

Figure 11
Regional Effects on Opinion Statements
 Francophones and Anglophones in the Ontario Public, 1991



Demographic analysis of global opinion statements

Overall, Francophones agree more strongly than Anglophones that, "People in cities get better service than people in towns and rural areas" (Figure 11). Average scores are 66 out of 100 for Francophones and 57 for Anglophones. But the differences are, to a large degree, due to the regional distribution of Francophone and Anglo-

phone populations. As shown in Figure 11, Francophones who live outside eastern Ontario are quite similar to Anglophones outside eastern Ontario; average responses of these groups are 59 and 56 respectively.

Region, education, and occupation did not have significant effects on Anglophone/Francophone differences with regard to any of the other global opinion statements.

Table 27 Satisfaction With Service Businesses Francophones and Anglophones in the Ontario Public, 1991				
Average	Percent Using Service, Past Year		Average Satisfaction (0 - 100)	
	Francophone	Anglophone	Francophone	Anglophone
Registration *	74 %	69 %	68	60
Information*	53 %	43 %	68	53
Financial Assistance	39 %	50 %	67	61
Enforcement/Justice	32 %	23 %	60	51

* Statistically significant difference in satisfaction scores

SATISFACTION WITH SERVICE BUSINESSES

The positive attitude that Francophones display toward the Ontario Government at a global level is evident in their satisfaction with the four service businesses (Table 27). Francophones rate satisfaction with Registration and Information services significantly higher than do Anglophones. For Financial Assistance and Enforcement/Justice services, there is a tendency in this direction, although it is not statistically significant.

The apparent differences in the use of the four service businesses, shown in Table 27, arise from the demographic variation between Anglophone and Francophone samples, that is, the differences in region, occupation, and education described earlier.

ELEMENTS OF GOOD SERVICE

Comparisons of Anglophone and Francophone opinions thus far have dealt only with service of the Ontario Government at a general level.

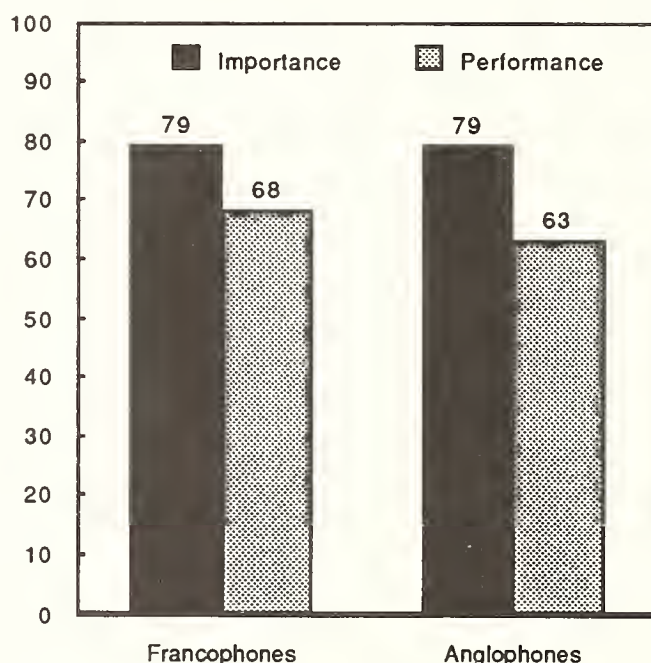
When assessing the 17 service elements, respondents describe a specific service experience. With this shift from the general to the specific, a statistically significant difference between Francophones and Anglophones no longer occurs.

As shown in Figure 12, both groups assess the **importance** of the service elements at 79 out of 100 (averaging across the 17 elements). Francophones rate Government **performance** on the elements at 68 while Anglophones give it 63 out of 100. This difference is more apparent than real, as it results in large measure from two underlying demographic effects:

- People living in eastern Ontario, where the majority of Francophones live, rate performance higher than people in other regions.
- Respondents with post-secondary education rate Government performance higher than those without (the Francophone sample has a significantly higher proportion of people with post-secondary education).

When these two factors are taken into account, the remaining difference between Anglophones and Francophones is not statistically significant.

Figure 12
Rating of Service Elements
Francophones and Anglophones in the Ontario Public, 1991



0 = Not at all important / Extremely poor performance
100 = Extremely important / Extremely good performance

The groups were also compared on each of the 17 service elements individually. A statistically significant difference occurs on only one element, "The service was good value for my tax dollar". Consistent with the opinion data described earlier, Francophones consider that Government performance represents better value than do Anglophones. Francophones rate performance on this element at 67 out of 100, while Anglophones rate it at 55.

It therefore appears that Francophones' more positive assessment of Ontario Government services is a **general perception** of the Ontario Government; it does not result from having different **experiences** with Ontario Government

services. It is possible that recent efforts made by the Government to improve service to Francophones are responsible for Francophones' more favourable perception of the Ontario Government, but this possibility cannot be directly tested with the present survey data.

MEASURES OF ACCEPTABLE SERVICE

On eleven of the sixteen measures of service, Anglophones and Francophones do not differ to a statistically significant degree. On the other five items, Anglophones would like a faster response (Table 28).

Table 28 Measures of Acceptable Service Francophones and Anglophones in the Ontario Public, 1991		
Measure	Average response	
	Francophones	Anglophones
Mail service		
Days from sending a letter until needed information is received	10.7	10.1
Telephone service		
Number of rings before phone is answered *	4.4	3.9
Percent of calls to get busy signal	19.8	17.1
Percent of calls to be put on hold	18.7	16.2
Minutes to wait on hold *	2.0	1.7
Number of transfers to get to the right person	1.7	1.6
Minutes to complete entire activity	10.1	10.6
Maximum number of people to deal with	2.2	2.2
Over-the-counter service		
Minutes before first contact with staff *	5.8	4.0
Minutes to wait in a line *	8.6	7.3
Minutes to complete entire activity	20.0	18.8
Maximum people to deal with	2.1	2.1
Minutes to travel to a government office	22.9	23.6
Office appointments		
Days to wait for an appointment	6.2	6.7
Minutes to wait on arrival *	10.5	7.4
Maximum number of people to deal with	2.1	2.0

* Statistically significant difference

**WHAT WOULD MAKE SERVICE BETTER
IN YOUR COMMUNITY?**

Francoophone and Anglophone samples differ to a statistically significant degree with respect to two of the eight topics bearing on good service in the community. As the issue of service in the community has been described in Chapters 1.8 and 3.9, only those points on which the groups differ are discussed in detail here.

Translation into languages other than English and French

Four categories of other-language services were investigated in the survey. Anglophones and Francophones do not differ significantly in their support for three of these:

- Translation of publications into other languages (24 percent in favour)
- Telephone service in other languages (26 percent in favour)
- Unspecified service in other languages, i.e., third-language services in general (28 percent in favour)

The fourth area of translation relates to over-the-counter services. A greater proportion of Francophones, 37 percent, than Anglophones, 26 percent, favour the availability of third-language translation in this area.

Extended office hours

While the majority of both Anglophones and Francophones support extended hours for Government offices, support is significantly stronger among Anglophones (Figure 13). Seventy-five percent of Anglophones would like to see hours extended, compared to 60 percent of Francophones.

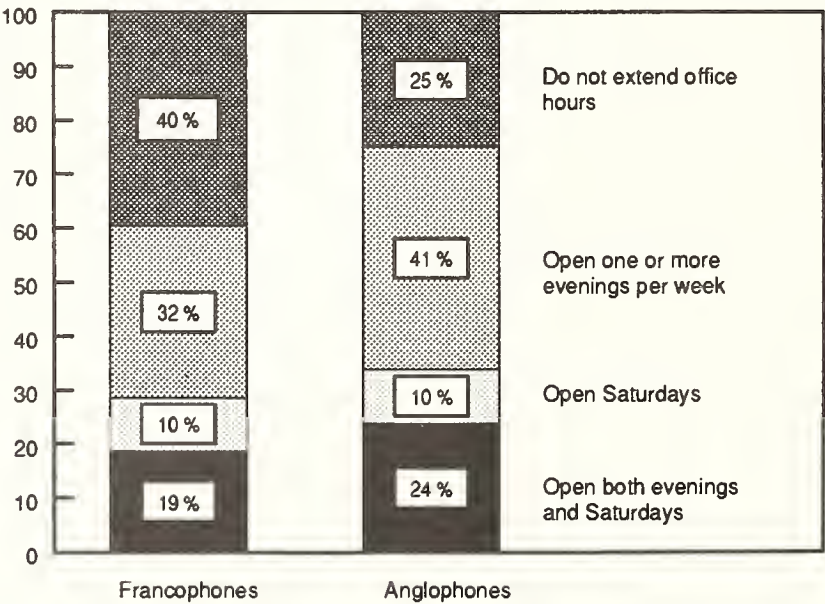
As a supplementary question, the survey asked whether the present office hours could be reduced, by closing one day or opening later in the morning, to compensate for extended evening and weekend hours. Anglophones and Francophones do not differ to a statistically significant degree. Overall, 43 percent stated that extra hours must be in addition to present hours, while 57 percent would accept a trade-off.

Community service issues that elicit similar responses from Anglophones and Francophones

Anglophones and Francophones do not differ significantly with respect to support for:

- Public transit to government offices
- Availability of parking at government offices
- Automated service delivery
- Access to on-line computer services
- One-stop government service centres

Figure 13
Should Government Office Hours Be Extended?
Francophones and Anglophones in the Ontario Public, 1991



THE OPS VIEW OF SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

2.1 Introduction

Why does the Ontario Public think that its Provincial Government's performance in customer service is less than it should be? This section examines reasons for the gap.

The problem can be outlined in two statements:

- 1. At the level of Ontario Government service in general, members of the OPS clearly understand that the Public see Ontario Government service as poor in quality.
- 2. On the other hand, individual members of the OPS describe their own performance and that of their immediate work group as very good; they rate their own performance considerably better than the Public does.

The Public thinks that the OPS is not providing particularly good service. Why does the OPS think that it is?

This chapter compares perceptions of the Ontario Public with those OPS staff who identify the Public as their primary customers, approximately three-quarters of all OPS staff. The other quarter of OPS staff provides internal services; their primary customers are other members of the OPS. This group is described in the later section on Internal Customer Service.

2.2 Overall Quality of Service

OPS staff were asked to anticipate how the Public views the services of the three levels of government. Their perceptions of the Public are generally accurate. They correctly anticipated that the Public would rate municipal governments highest, followed by the Ontario Government, with the federal government lowest.

The actual scores that OPS staff assigned closely match the Public's scores. On the scale of 0 to

Table 29 Overall Quality of Service Ontario Public and OPS Serving the Public, 1991		
	Public How good is the service?	OPS How does the Public rate service?
Your municipal government	55	53
Ontario Government *	45	51
Federal government	36	36

* Statistically significant difference

100, OPS staff guessed that the Public would rate municipal governments at 57 out of 100, while the Public's actual rating was 55 — these scores do not differ to a statistically significant degree. OPS and Public ratings for the federal government are identical, 36 points each.

The OPS anticipated that the Public would rate services of the Ontario Government at 51 points, slightly higher than the Public's actual rating of 45 points. Although statistically significant, this difference is not large in the context of the range of scores for the three levels of government. The Ontario Government is correctly ranked by the OPS as falling between the municipal and federal levels.

**PERCEPTIONS BY THE FIVE
OPS JOB GROUPS**

OPS staff were divided into five job categories:

- Front-line staff
- Front-line supervisory staff
- Support staff
- Middle management
- Senior management

The five groups do not differ significantly with regard to their assessment of how the Public views Ontario Government service, at the municipal, provincial, or federal levels. The five job groups therefore share a common perception of Public attitudes toward services of the three levels of government.

**2.3 Global Opinions
of Ontario Govern-
ment Service**

OPS staff described their own opinions of Ontario Government service on the same 10 scales as the Public (Table 30). In general, OPS opinions closely match those of the Public.

- OPS staff agree with the Public that Ontario Government service fails to provide good value for the taxpayer's money — this statement was given the strongest negative rating of the 10 by both the Public and OPS.
- OPS staff agree with the Public that improving service should save money. This statement topped the Public's list and ranks second for the OPS.

Table 30 Opinions of Ontario Government Service Ontario Public and OPS Serving the Public,1991		
	Public	OPS
Improving the quality of service to the Public should save money *	71	65
Ontario Government service keeps getting more complicated *	68	74
It often seems that regulations and policies are not applied consistently *	59	65
People in cities get better service than do people in towns and rural areas *	59	50
The language used in forms and documents is hard to understand *	52	59
The Ontario Government treats people equally, regardless of gender, age, race, culture, or ability *	52	61
Staff dealing directly with the Public are properly trained and qualified	48	47
Staff are overworked and cannot give customers individual attention *	44	61
Overall, the service of the Ontario Government is getting better *	42	46
Ontario Government service provides good value for the taxpayers' money *	37	44

0 = Strongly disagree 100 = Strongly agree
* Statistically significant difference

Figure 14
Global Opinions of Ontario Government Service
OPS Serving the Public, 1991

Opinion:

Service is getting more complex.

Improving service will save money.

Regulations and policies are not applied consistently.

Government treats all equally, regardless of gender, age, race, culture, ability.

Staff are overworked; can't give individual attention

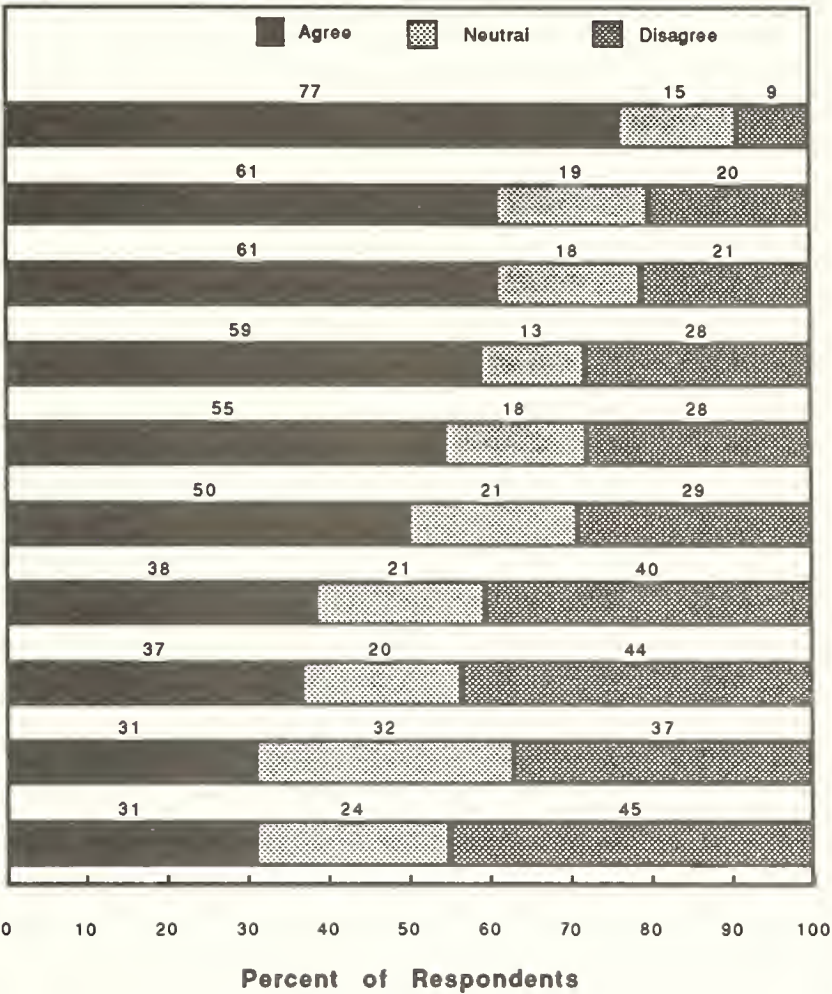
Language in forms, documents is hard to understand.

Cities get better service than towns, rural areas.

Staff are properly trained.

Service is getting better.

Service is good value for tax money.



The largest difference between OPS and Public perceptions occurs on the question of workloads and their effect on good customer service. The OPS rates the workload problem at 61 points, 17 points higher than the Public.

The five OPS job groups differ in their ratings of just one statement; support staff are most negative in their assessment of good value for taxpayers' money. Their rating is 39 points, compared to the average score of 47 for other groups.

Figure 14 illustrates the range of OPS opinion on the global statements. As noted, their average scores are roughly parallel to the Public's, and thus the weight of OPS opinion is more negative than positive.

The majority opinion reflects favourably on Government of Ontario service for just two of the 10 statements. These are:

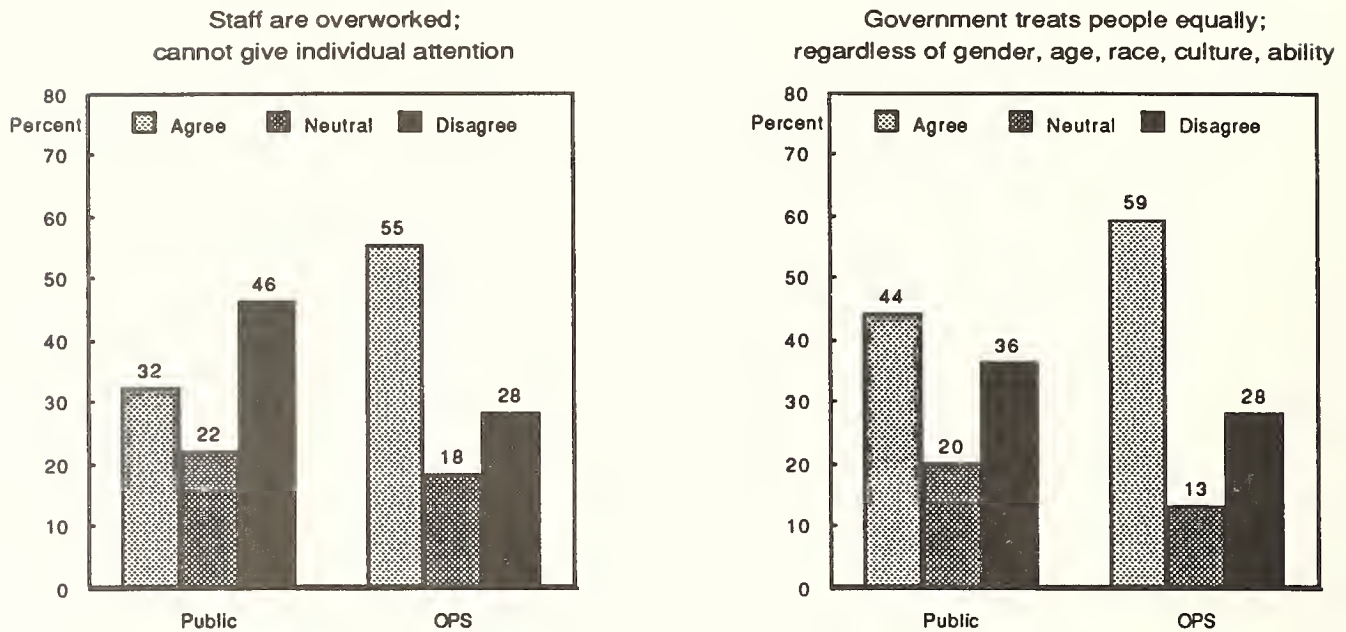
- "Improving service will save money" (61 percent agree).
- "The Ontario Government treats people equally, regardless of gender, age, race, culture, or ability" (59 percent agree).

Public and OPS responses differed most sharply on the two global statements shown in Figure 15.

First, while a majority of OPS staff agrees that they are overworked and cannot give customers individual attention, the majority of Public respondents do not hold this position.

Second, a majority of the OPS believes that staff treat all people equally, while the majority of Public respondents do not.

Figure 15
Differences in Public and OPS Opinion on Global Statements
 Percent of respondents: Ontario Public and OPS Serving the Public, 1991



2.4 Elements of Good Service

The OPS and the Public used the 17 service elements to describe their own immediate experience with Ontario Government service.

Members of the Public described a single recent experience. They rated their experience by:

- The importance of each service element to them at the time
- OPS performance on each element

The OPS described its own provision of service to the Public in three ways. It rated:

- The importance of each service element to its own customers
- Its own performance on each service element
- The performance of members of its immediate work group on each element

Previous sections of this report showed that the OPS and the Public are in agreement about service in general; the present results show that their perceptions diverge at the level of specific service elements.

OPS employees rate services that they provide very high in both importance and performance. They rate their own performance slightly higher than that of others in their work group. (See Figure 16).

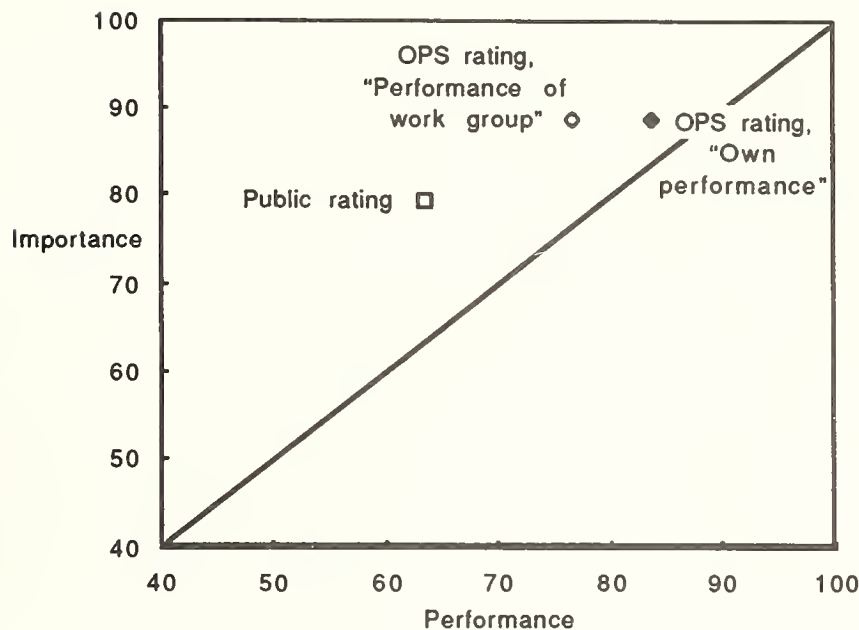
IMPORTANCE OF SERVICE ELEMENTS

The OPS rates importance higher than do members of the Public. Across all 17 elements, the average OPS rating is 89 out of 100, ten points higher than the average Public rating of 79. The OPS score does not vary to a statistically significant degree across the five job groups.

The fact that OPS ratings of importance are relatively high is a positive finding. It indicates that OPS staff are well aware of the importance of the elements of good service — they do not require further convincing.

Looking at the individual elements, it is apparent that large gaps tend to occur on elements that the OPS rates as high in importance. Of the 10 largest gaps, 9 have importance scores over

Figure 16
Average Scores for Importance and Performance
Ontario Public and OPS Serving the Public, 1991



0 = Not at all important / Extremely poor performance
 100 = Extremely important / Extremely good performance

90. ("Staff take pride in their work" is the one exception.)

Three elements show a match: "Procedures are easy to understand", "The office is designed with customer needs in mind", and "The office is in a convenient location".

OPS RATINGS OF "OWN PERFORMANCE"

OPS staff rate their own performance higher than the Public does on each of the 17 service elements. OPS rates its own performance at 84 out of 100 — 20 points higher than the Public's assessment of 64. The gap on the performance dimension is thus twice the size of the gap on the importance dimension.

The fact that the OPS rates its own performance higher than does the Public indicates a problem with regard to customer service. The OPS's higher rating of importance presumably does not signal a concern.

Service is good value for taxpayers' money

Employees' ratings of their own performance on this element present an interesting dichotomy. When answering the earlier question about Ontario Government service in general being good value for tax money, the Public gave a score of 37, the OPS 44; the two groups were in general agreement.

On the other hand, when talking about a particular service experience, the Public's "good value" rating increases 19 points to 56; the OPS score increases a full 40 points to 84. Both groups have become dramatically more positive, and in addition, they are no longer in agreement with each other.

One possible explanation for the change is that the general rating of "good value" represents a stereotype about the Ontario Government as a whole. Members of the OPS may be close to the Public's position because they themselves are customers of the provincial government, as well as providers.

Table 31
Importance of Service Elements
Ontario Public and OPS Serving the Public, 1991

Service element	Importance	
	Public	OPS
GAPS		
Customers' confidentiality is protected*	77	92
Different staff provide consistent information*	76	91
Staff take pride in their work*	71	86
Staff are courteous and helpful*	80	92
The service is there when customers need it*	80	92
Staff are knowledgeable and competent*	83	94
Staff communicate clearly, were easy to talk to*	82	93
Staff are direct and give straight answers*	82	91
Customers get what they need in a reasonable time*	82	91
Staff give up-to-date, accurate information*	84	92
It is easy to get to the right person or department*	79	87
Service is good value for taxpayers' money*	79	87
Customer requests get a quick response*	82	89
Staff understood customer's needs*	82	89
MATCHES		
Procedures are easy to understand	82	85
Office is designed with customer needs in mind	74	74
Office is in a convenient location	81	82
Average	79	89

0 = Not at all important 100 = Extremely important

* Statistically significant difference

Ratings of own performance by job groups

Within the OPS, there is a small but significant effect of job group; managers rate their own performance lower than do other groups. (See Table 33.)

OPS RATINGS OF CO-WORKERS' PERFORMANCE

Members of the OPS rate their own performance on the 17 service elements slightly higher than that of their co-workers. The average rating for "own performance" is 84 points and of co-workers' performance is 77 points. The difference, 7 points, is small in comparison to the 20-point difference between staff's own

ratings of performance and Public perception of OPS performance.

The average score of 77 for performance of co-workers is consistent across the five job groups; groups do not differ to a statistically significant degree.

DEMOGRAPHIC EFFECTS ON SERVICE ELEMENTS

Demographic variation in OPS ratings of importance and performance are limited to a seven small differences. These are shown in Table 34; however, their small size is such that they do little to advance an understanding of the OPS view.

Table 32
"My Own Performance" on Service Elements
Ontario Public and OPS Serving the Public, 1991

Service element	Performance	
	Public	OPS
GAPS		
Staff take pride in their work*	58	88
Service is good value for taxpayers' money*	56	84
Staff are courteous and helpful*	65	91
Staff communicate clearly, were easy to talk to*	65	88
The service is there when customers need it*	61	83
Different staff provide consistent information*	62	84
Staff are knowledgeable and competent*	66	88
Customers get what they need in a reasonable time*	59	81
Customer requests get a quick response*	60	81
It is easy to get to the right person or department*	62	82
Staff are direct and give straight answers*	66	86
Staff give up-to-date, accurate information*	68	85
Customers' confidentiality is protected*	78	94
Staff understood customer's needs*	68	81
Procedures are easy to understand*	67	78
Office is in a convenient location*	68	78
Office is designed with customer needs in mind*	60	67
Average*	64	84

0 = Extremely poor performance 100 = Extremely good performance
*Statistically significant difference

Table 33
"My Own Performance" by Job Group
Ontario Public and OPS Serving the Public, 1991

		Performance
Job	Front-line supervisor	86
	Front line	84
	Support staff	83
	Middle manager	82
	Senior manager	81

Table 34
Demographic Influences on Service Elements
OPS Serving the Public, 1991

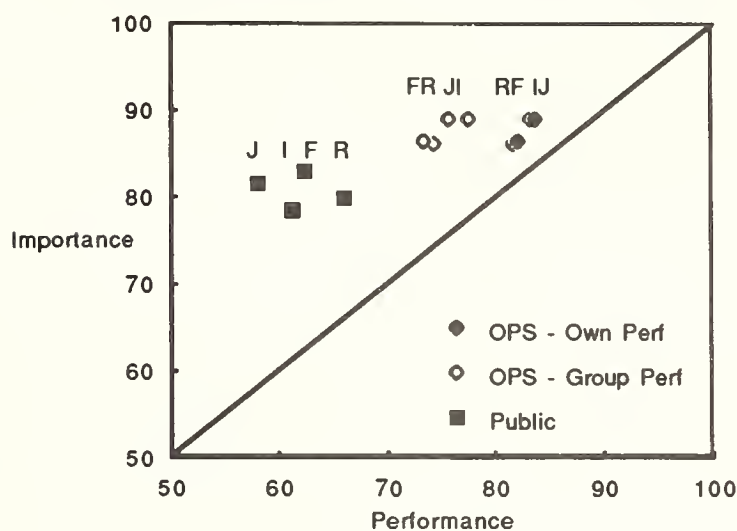
	Importance	Average Score (0 – 100)
Region	Central	88
	South-east	89
	South-west	88
	North-east	92
	North-west	92
Gender	Female	90
	Male	87
Age	18–34	87
	35–49	89
	50 +	89
Own Performance		
Gender	Female	85
	Male	83
Age	18–34	82
	35–49	84
	50 +	85
Performance of Work Group		
Size of community	Toronto	74
	100,000 plus	76
	10,000 plus	78
	Small town, village	80
	Rural area	78
Age	18–34	74
	35–49	77
	50+	79

2.5 Importance and Performance Ratings of Service Businesses

The four service businesses — Registration, Information, Financial Assistance, and Enforcement/Justice — elicited similar scores on importance and performance.

Figure 17 shows the average score for all service elements for each service business. OPS staff in Information and Enforcement/Justice services rate their performance slightly higher than do staff in Registration and Financial Assistance services. The Public, however, do the opposite.

Figure 17
Average Scores for Four Service Businesses
 Ontario Public and OPS Serving the Public, 1991



I = Information
 R = Registration
 F = Financial Assistance
 J = Enforcement/Justice

Table 35
Measures of Acceptable Service
 Ontario Public and OPS Serving the Public, 1991

Measure	Average		OPS stricter than
	Public	OPS	Public by:
Telephone service			
Number of rings before phone is answered	3.9	3.0	23 %
Percent of calls to get busy signal	17.2	11.0	36 %
Percent of calls to be put on hold	16.2	13.1	19 %
Minutes to wait on hold	1.7	1.1	35 %
Number of transfers to get to the right person	1.6	1.3	19 %
Minutes to complete entire activity	10.6	8.6	19 %
Maximum number of people to deal with	2.2	2.1	5 %
Over-the-counter service			
Minutes before first contact with staff	4.2	2.2	48 %
Minutes to wait in a line	7.5	5.0	33 %
Minutes to complete entire activity	18.9	14.1	25 %
Maximum people to deal with	2.1	1.8	14 %
Office appointments			
Days to wait for an appointment	6.6	5.1	23 %
Minutes to wait on arrival	7.6	4.2	45 %
Maximum number of people to deal with	2.0	1.9	5 %

2.6 Measures of Acceptable Service

The Public and OPS described levels of service that they would find acceptable in three common methods of service delivery — telephone service, over-the-counter service, and office appointments. In each case, the OPS set tighter criteria for acceptable service than did the Public. Across the 15 concrete examples of staff-customer interaction (Table 35), the OPS criterion is 25 percent stricter, on average, than the Public's.

In other words, the OPS is fully aware of its customer needs. **OPS perception of Public need is not a barrier to good service.**¹ This point confirms the importance ratings, which

also indicated that OPS perceptions of the importance of service elements did not constitute a problem.

Applying the average criteria shown on the previous page would satisfy 50 percent of customers. To satisfy 90 percent of customers, the tighter set of standards shown in Table 36 would apply. The first line, for example, indicates that 90 percent of the Public would be satisfied if the phone were answered in two rings. The OPS standard is the same — 90 percent think that answering on two rings is an acceptable level of service.

OPS criteria is tighter than the Public's on 4 of the 14 measures, but in general, applying the 90 percentile criterion results in a close match between Public and OPS expectations.

Table 36 90th Percentile Criteria of Acceptable Service Ontario Public and OPS Serving the Public, 1991			
Measure	Public	OPS	Does OPS differ from Public?
Telephone service			
Number of rings before phone is answered	2	2	No
Percent of calls to get busy signal	0	0	No
Percent of calls to be put on hold	0	0	No
Seconds to wait on hold	30	30	No
Number of transfers to get to the right person	1	1	No
Minutes to complete entire activity	5	5	No
Maximum number of people to deal with	2	1	Yes
Over-the-counter service			
Minutes before first contact with staff	1	1	No
Minutes to wait in a line	3	1	Yes
Minutes to complete entire activity	10	5	Yes
Maximum people to deal with	1	1	No
Office appointments			
Days to wait for an appointment	3	3	No
Minutes to wait on arrival	3	1	Yes
Maximum number of people to deal with	1	1	No
Office appointments			
Days to wait for an appointment	3	3	No
Minutes to wait on arrival	3	1	Yes
Maximum number of people to deal with	1	1	No

¹ Assessment of the actual level of service provided by different ministries was not within the mandate of this study.

Table 37
Barriers to Good Customer Service
OPS Serving the Public, 1991

Barrier	Average Score (0 – 100)
Lack of staff – high workloads	69
Internal bureaucracy	69
Lack of financial incentive for good performance	65
Slow approval processes	62
Low morale within OPS	57
Too many regulations, guidelines	56
Lack of staff training	55
Vague policies	54
Lack of strong management support	54
Lack of authority to make decisions	53
Poor cooperation within own ministry	51
Lack of clear language in forms and documents	51
Poor knowledge of other ministries' services	51
Overly complicated legislation	51
Poor cooperation among ministries	50
Oversensitivity to political considerations	49
Outdated equipment	46
Labour-management relations	45
Poor cooperation between OPS and other governments	42
Lack of affordable access, e.g., 1-800 numbers	42
Too many services are offered	34

2.7 Barriers to Good Service

OPS staff are sufficiently aware of the importance of service elements. They set higher standards of performance than does the Public in relation to modes of service delivery (phone, over-the-counter, appointments). They also rate their own performance in delivering quality service high; they rate their co-workers' performance high as well.

Respondents to the OPS survey rated 21 potential barriers to good customer service with the result shown in Table 37. The highest-ranked barriers suggest two problems with the OPS structure:

- "Lack of staff - high workloads" may be a **result** of systemic barriers such as bureaucracy, slow approval processes, excessive regulations, and lack of authority to make decisions. It is not necessarily a causal factor.
- "Lack of financial incentive for good performance", and "Lack of management support" suggest a problem of recognition for good performance. Low morale may be a **result** of this.

JOB DIFFERENCES IN BARRIERS TO GOOD CUSTOMER SERVICE

There is great consistency among OPS job groups in their rating of the 21 barriers. Job groups differ to a statistically significant degree in their assessment of just three barriers:

Table 38
Job Differences in Barriers to Good Customer Service
OPS Serving the Public, 1991

Barrier		Average Score (0 – 100)
Oversensitivity to political considerations	Senior managers	59
	Middle managers	56
	Support staff	48
	Front line	47
	Front-line supervisors	41
Lack of knowledge of services provided by other ministries	Front line	54
	Support staff	52
	Middle managers	49
	Front-line supervisors	47
	Senior managers	43
Lack of staff — high workloads	Senior managers	75
	Middle managers	75
	Front-line supervisors	71
	Front line	67
	Support staff	66

- Political considerations prove a trial primarily to management, rather than to front-line and support staff. This barrier shows the greatest divergence among job groups of the entire set of 21 statements.
- Lack of knowledge of other ministries' services poses a problem primarily to front-line and support staff — presumably because they have the task of directing the Public's inquiries to the appropriate ministry.
- Lack of staff/high workloads is a strong concern at all levels, but particularly among senior and middle management.

2.8 Opportunities for Improvement

OPS staff were asked to indicate which of the 21 potential barriers represented the greatest opportunities for improving customer service (Table 39). In general, items that rank high as barriers also appear as major opportunities for improvement.

Once again, the 21 dimensions may represent a combination of causes and effects. For example, the substantial proportion of staff who wish to address "Lack of staff/high workloads" might well find that reducing bureaucracy and speeding up approval processes furthered their goal.

2.9 Written Comments on Surveys

The survey invited respondents to write comments. A surprising proportion, nearly fifty percent of both Public and OPS respondents, did so. A selection of these comments has been integrated into the report to illustrate key findings and broad strategies. In addition, all 996 OPS commentaries and a random selection of the 556 Public commentaries were analyzed, and their content is described under nine major topics (Table 40).

The questionnaire suggested that respondents comment directly on customer service issues, and 21 percent of Public respondents and 36 percent of OPS respondents who wrote com-

Table 39
Opportunities to Improve Customer Service
OPS Serving the Public, 1991

Opportunity	Percent of OPS choosing this item
Lack of sufficient staff – high workloads	43
Internal bureaucracy	23
Slow approval processes	23
Lack of staff training	20
Lack of financial incentive for good performance	19
Low morale within OPS	18
Lack of strong management support	15
Lack of clear language in forms and documents	15
Poor cooperation within own ministry	14
Poor cooperation among ministries	14
Poor knowledge of other ministries services	13
Outdated equipment	12
Lack of authority to make decisions	12
Oversensitivity to political considerations	12
Lack of affordable access, e.g., 1-800 numbers	11
Too many regulations, guidelines	10
Vague policies	7
Overly complicated legislation	6
Labour-management relations	5
Too many services offered	3
Poor cooperation between OPS and other governments	2

Note: percentages add to approximately 300, as respondents were asked to identify three areas of opportunity

ments did this. Most respondents, however, did not restrict their commentaries to customer service, and wrote about a broad range of issues. These issues indicate, in an informal way, what is uppermost in respondents' minds on the general subject of the Ontario Government and its services.

In tone, most Public comments were somewhat critical, and most people mentioned money as a concern in one way or another. Explicit references to high taxes were common, and references to cost coloured comments on other issues.

The Public's commentaries were almost exclusively "accurate", in that they discussed programs and services of the Ontario Government,

and did not confuse these with federal or municipal services.

The Public and the OPS stressed quite different themes in their comments:

- Value for tax dollars is a more frequent concern of the Public than the OPS.
- Internal OPS issues are largely behind the Public's "line of visibility", and so receive little comment from the Public. A few respondents commented on over-paid, under-worked staff, a theme missing in OPS commentaries.
- The OPS comments on internal matters frequently mentioned such issues as workloads, staffing problems, and recognition and reward. Comments reiterate, to a great extent,

- those items that ranked high as barriers to good customer service. (See Table 37.)
- Comments on employment equity make up slightly more than half the total number of OPS comments on "treatment of women and minorities". Eight percent of OPS respondents who wrote comments raised this issue, and almost all who did so were critical of employment equity

Of interest, because they received little mention, are such issues as relocation of Ontario Government offices (2 percent of OPS respondents) and environmental issues (2 percent of the Public and less than 1 percent of the OPS).

Table 40
Verbatim Comments
Ontario Public and OPS, 1991

	Percent of Commentaries	
	Public	OPS
Comments requested on this topic		
Explicit customer service issues	21	36
Spontaneous comments		
Internal OPS issues (morale, authority to make decisions, workloads, pay, promotion, etc.)	4	40
OPS management and staff (government employees in general, labour relations, management attitudes, etc.)	5	22
Structure and role of government (bureaucracy, efficiency, size of government, etc.)	19	28
Access to Ontario Government services (telephone access, hours of service, difficult forms, etc.)	14	22
Treatment of women and minorities (French, employment equity, multiculturalism, etc.)	13	15
Specific programs and services (OHIP, Workers' compensation, birth certificates, motor vehicle registration, etc.)	23	9
Politicians, political parties, political agendas	23	5
Taxes, value for tax dollars	19	3
Other economic and social issues (abusing the system, regional issues, environment, etc.)	6	3

Note: Columns add to more than 100 percent, as some people commented on several issues

THE OPS VIEW OF INTERNAL CUSTOMER SERVICE

3.1 Introduction

Approximately three-quarters of OPS staff see their primary customer as the Ontario Public; the other one-quarter see their primary customer as people within the OPS. This chapter compares the views of these groups in two major areas:

- Perceptions of internal services such as finance and human resources.
- Perceptions of service quality as measured by the service elements and other indicators.

By definition, the two groups of staff differ in composition. More than half of the staff serving the Public, 57 percent, consider themselves front-line workers or front-line supervisors. Only 13 percent of staff serving the OPS define themselves as front line. This difference in composition follows from the fact many more front-line staff are required to serve the Ontario population than are required to provide services to other staff. Nonetheless, the difference in job composition of the two groups must be considered whenever the groups are compared.

3.2 Global Opinions of Ontario Government Service

Staff who serve the Public and those who serve the OPS hold broadly similar perceptions of the Ontario Government and its service (Table 42). They differ to a statistically significant degree on just one of the ten global statements, "Service keeps getting more complicated". Staff serving the Public agree with this more strongly than other staff. Nonetheless, the idea that service is getting more complicated is the most strongly held opinion of both groups.

Job groups do not differ to a statistically significant degree in their response to any statement.

Table 41
Job Composition of Two Staff Groups
Staff Serving the Public and the OPS, 1991

Job	Percent of Respondents Who:	
	Serve Public	Serve OPS
Front Line	48	6
Front-Line Supervisor	8	7
Support Staff	17	32
Middle Manager	17	26
Senior Manager	2	5
Other ¹	7	24
Total	100	100

¹ Because the precise membership of the "Other" category is unknown, it has been excluded from comparisons of job groups.

Table 42
Opinions of Ontario Government Service
Staff Serving the Public and the OPS, 1991

	Average Score		
	Primary Customer Public	OPS	All Staff
Ontario Government service keeps getting more complicated *	74	70	73
Improving the quality of service to the Public should save money	65	64	65
It often seems that regulations and policies are not applied consistently	65	63	65
The Ontario Government treats people equally, regardless of gender, age, race, culture, or ability	61	58	60
Staff are overworked and cannot give customers individual attention	61	57	60
The language used in forms and documents is hard to understand	59	54	58
People in cities get better service than do people in towns and rural areas	50	52	51
Overall, the service of the Ontario Government is getting better	46	50	47
Staff dealing directly with the Public are properly trained and qualified	47	43	46
Ontario Government service provides good value for the taxpayers' money	44	44	44

0 = Strongly Disagree 100 = Strongly Agree

* Statistically significant difference

How does the Public rate Ontario Government service?

The two staff groups agree on how the Ontario Public perceives services of the three levels of government: the federal government provides the lowest quality of service and municipal government the best. Staff who serve the Public expect the Public to rate the Ontario Government at 51 out of 100; staff serving the OPS expect a rating of 50 out of 100. The ratings do not differ to a statistically significant degree.

3.3 Do You Have Internal Customers?

It is a truism of current organizational practice that every employee of an organization has customers within the organization — people to whom the employee reports or who receive the work that the employee performs. This view is far from universal within the OPS (Table 43).

Table 43
Do You Have Internal Customers?
OPS Serving the Public, 1991

Do you have customers within the OPS?	Yes	No
Front-line staff	42 %	58 %
Front-line supervisor	43 %	57 %
Support staff	48 %	52 %
Middle manager	57 %	43 %
Senior management	61 %	39 %
Average of five job groups	53 %	47 %

Among those who serve the Public, a full 53 percent state that they have no internal customers. There is some variation among job groups. Thirty-nine percent of senior managers and 43 percent of middle managers state that they have no internal customers. More than half of those in other job groups are unaware that they have internal customers; the figure is highest for front-line staff, where 58 percent hold this view.

The situation is quite different among OPS staff who serve the OPS. This group defined their primary function as serving other government employees, and consequently almost 100 percent stated that they had internal customers.

It is possible that the differing perceptions of internal and external service providers underlie some of the problems in service delivery that OPS staff identify. For example, a greater appreciation of internal customers by staff serving the Public might well result in faster approval processes and might generally alleviate unproductive aspects of bureaucracy.

The data at hand do suggest that this could be the case. Those staff who perceive that they

have internal customers rate the barriers to good service slightly higher (more problematic) than those who do not have internal customers.

3.4 Eight Internal Services

OPS staff rated eight internal services to indicate the importance of that service in the context of their own job and to assess the level of performance that the OPS provides. The services are:

- Accommodation¹
- Human resources
- Purchasing
- Communication¹
- Information technology
- Legal services
- Finance
- Policy formulation and program design

The perceived importance of the internal services varies widely (Table 44). Across the OPS as a whole, importance scores ranged from 40 to 71 out of 100. By contrast, there is close agreement on the level of performance achieved

Table 44 Assessment of Internal Services All OPS, 1991			
	Importance	Performance	Gap
Human resources*	70	48	22
Information technology *	71	53	18
Policy formulation and program design *	65	47	18
Communication *	63	52	12
Finance *	59	50	9
Purchasing *	56	49	7
Legal services	53	57	- 4
Accommodation *	40	54	-14
Average *	60	51	9

* Statistically significant difference between importance and performance; entries rounded independently

¹ "Accommodation" was labelled "Accommodation and transportation" in the survey questionnaire. Participants in later focus groups suggested that transportation be dropped from the description as transportation is not relevant to the great majority of staff, while accommodation is a universal requirement. Similarly, "Communication" was suggested as more pertinent than the original "Information, communication, and marketing".

in delivery of internal services. Performance ratings are clustered about the mid-point of the scale, ranging only from 47 to 57.

The largest gaps occur on the services that are deemed most important:

- Human resources
- Information technology
- Policy formulation and program design

Figure 18 illustrates two aspects of OPS's assessment of internal services:

- The services differ more strongly in importance (vertical dimension) than in performance (horizontal dimension).
- Importance and performance are not strongly related; higher importance ratings do not imply better performance.

STAFF SERVING EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL CUSTOMERS

Staff serving the Public and the OPS differ significantly in their perception of three internal services (Figure 19).

Staff serving the Public see a bigger gap than those serving internal customers for two services; importance exceeds performance in both instances:

- Policy formulation and program design
- Communication

Staff serving internal customers register a bigger gap with regard to legal services, but for both groups of staff, performance exceeds importance.

Figure 18
Importance and Performance Ratings of Eight Internal Services
All OPS, 1991

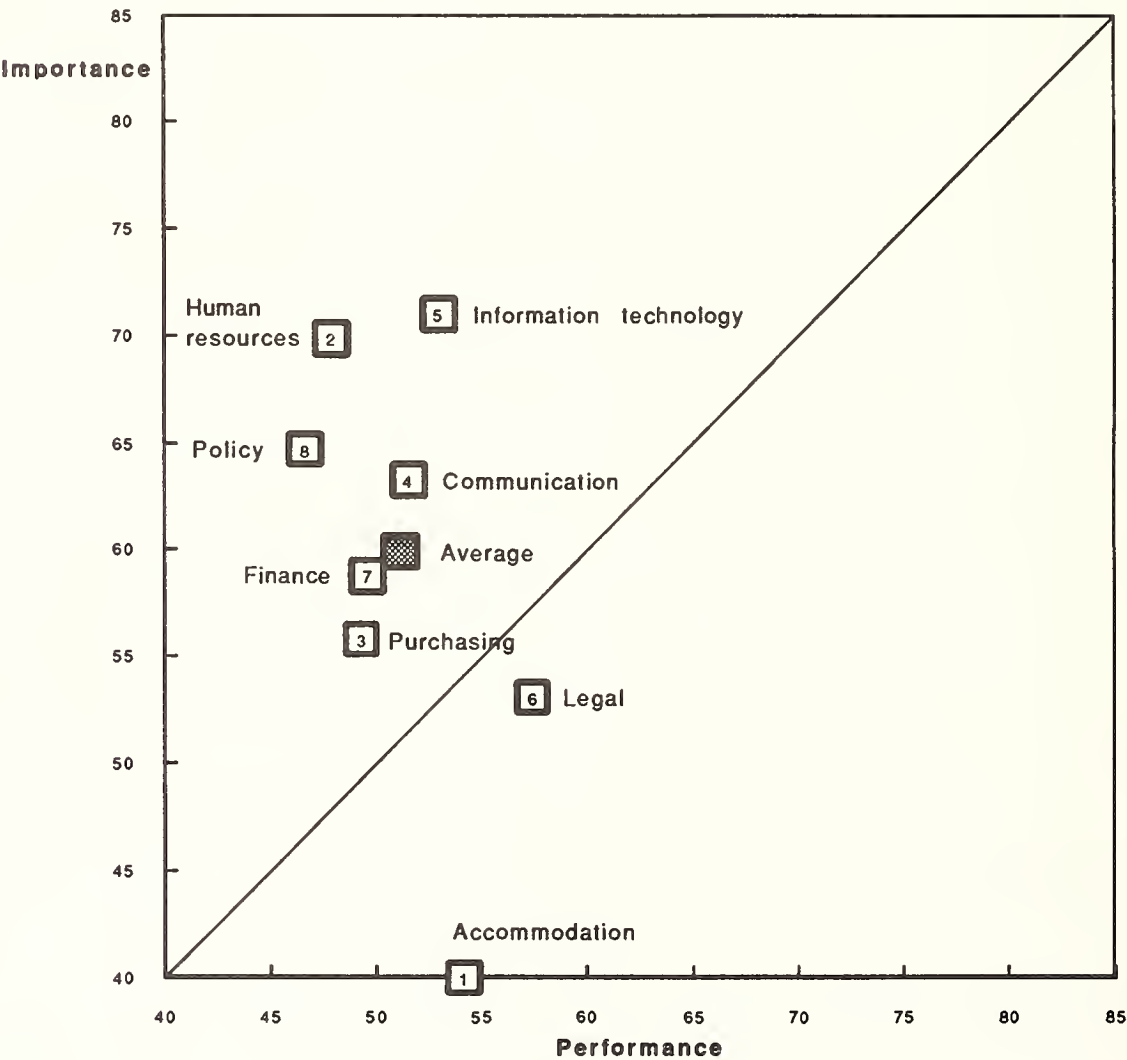
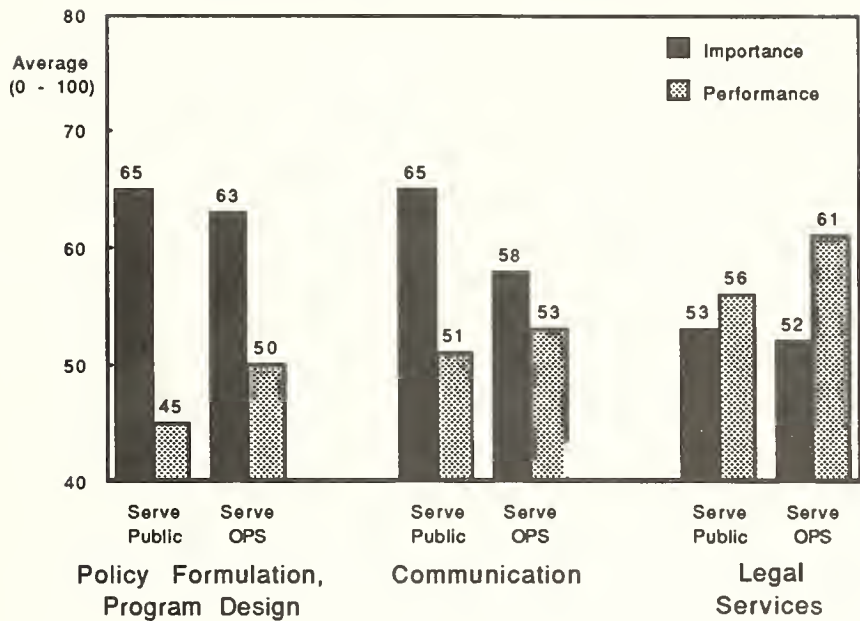


Figure 19
Gap Differences for Internal Services
Staff Serving the Public and the OPS, 1991



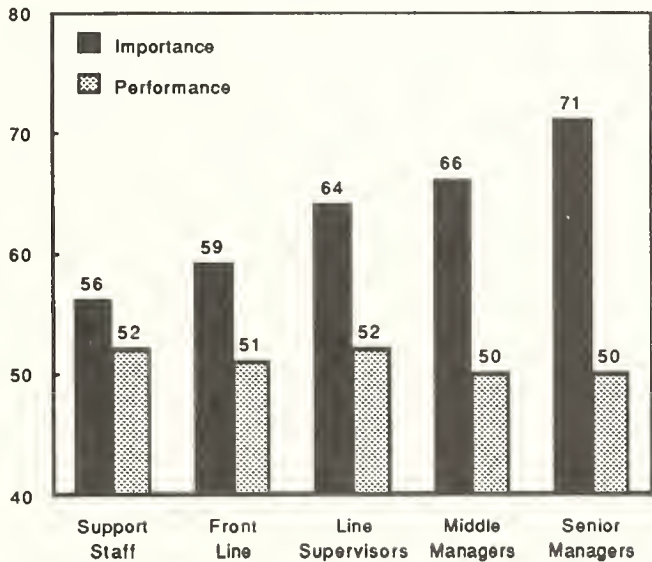
PERCEPTIONS OF INTERNAL SERVICES BY JOB GROUPS

The five job groups differ markedly in their assessment of most internal services (Figure 20). For several services, staff serving the Public differ from those serving the OPS, but this factor is not as consistent as is the job factor. Managers tend to rate the importance of internal services higher

than other staff. On the other hand, managers and other staff differ little, if at all, in their assessment of performance on any of the internal services. As a result, managers perceive a larger importance-performance gap than other staff.

Human Resources produces the largest. For middle and senior managers, importance exceeds performance by more than 30 points on the 100-point scale. Large gaps also appear in Infor-

Figure 20
Rating of Internal Services by Five Job Groups
All OPS, 1991



0 = Not at all important / Extremely poor performance
 100 = Extremely important / Extremely good performance

mation Technology. This gap is large across all job groups. The increasing disparity from support staff to senior management is clearly evident in Figure 20. Data are averages across the eight internal services.

A detailed account on how job groups rate internal services appears in Table 45. Two highlights from these data are summarized here.

1. Largest gap

The largest single importance-performance gap for each job group is:

- Front line: 28 points for policy formulation and program design
- Line supervisors: 29 points for human resources
- Support staff: 16 points for information technology
- Middle managers: 34 points for human resources
- Senior managers: 38 points for human resources

2. Services where matches occur

Consider, for the moment, that a “match” occurs when importance exceeds performance by less than ten points. On this basis, different job groups assess matches primarily in Legal Services and Accommodation.

- Legal services: All five groups perceive a match.
- Accommodation: All groups except senior managers perceive a match.
- Purchasing: Front line and support staff perceive a match.
- Finance: Front line and support staff perceive a match.
- Communication: Support staff perceive a match.
- Policy formulation and program design: No groups perceive a match.
- Information technology: No groups perceive a match.
- Human resources: No groups perceive a match.

Table 45
Importance-Performance Gaps for Job Groups
All OPS, 1991

	Front line	Line supervisor	Support staff	Middle manager	Senior manager	All Staff
Accommodation						
Importance *	39	44	34	45	61	40
Performance *	56	53	56	51	48	54
Gap *	- 17	- 9	- 22	- 6	12	- 14 ‡
Human resources						
Importance *	66	78	65	78	83	70
Performance	49	49	52	44	45	48
Gap *	18	29	15	34	38	22 ‡
Purchasing						
Importance *	52	68	54	62	63	56
Performance	50	53	50	47	46	49
Gap *	2	15	4	15	17	7 ‡
Communication						
Importance *	68	60	61	64	68	63
Performance	52	52	52	51	49	52
Gap	16	9	8	13	18	12 ‡
Information technology						
Importance *	71	74	68	75	78	71
Performance	53	56	53	52	52	53
Gap	18	18	16	23	27	18 ‡
Legal services						
Importance *	51	53	46	60	67	53
Performance *	55	57	56	58	62	57
Gap	- 4	- 3	- 10	2	5	- 4
Finance						
Importance *	54	64	55	71	73	59
Performance	48	54	51	47	52	50
Gap *	6	10	5	24	20	9 ‡
Policy formulation, design						
Importance *	67	63	58	70	77	65
Performance	44	44	47	48	49	47
Gap *	28	19	11	22	27	18 ‡
Average						
Importance *	59	64	56	66	71	60
Performance	51	52	52	50	50	51
Gap *	8	11	4	16	21	9 ‡

* Significant difference among job groups

‡ Significant importance-performance gap for all staff taken together

Negative gap: Performance exceeds importance Positive gap: Importance exceeds performance

Note: Entries are rounded independently

Figure 21
Average Importance and Performance Scores for Eight Internal Services
 All OPS, 1991

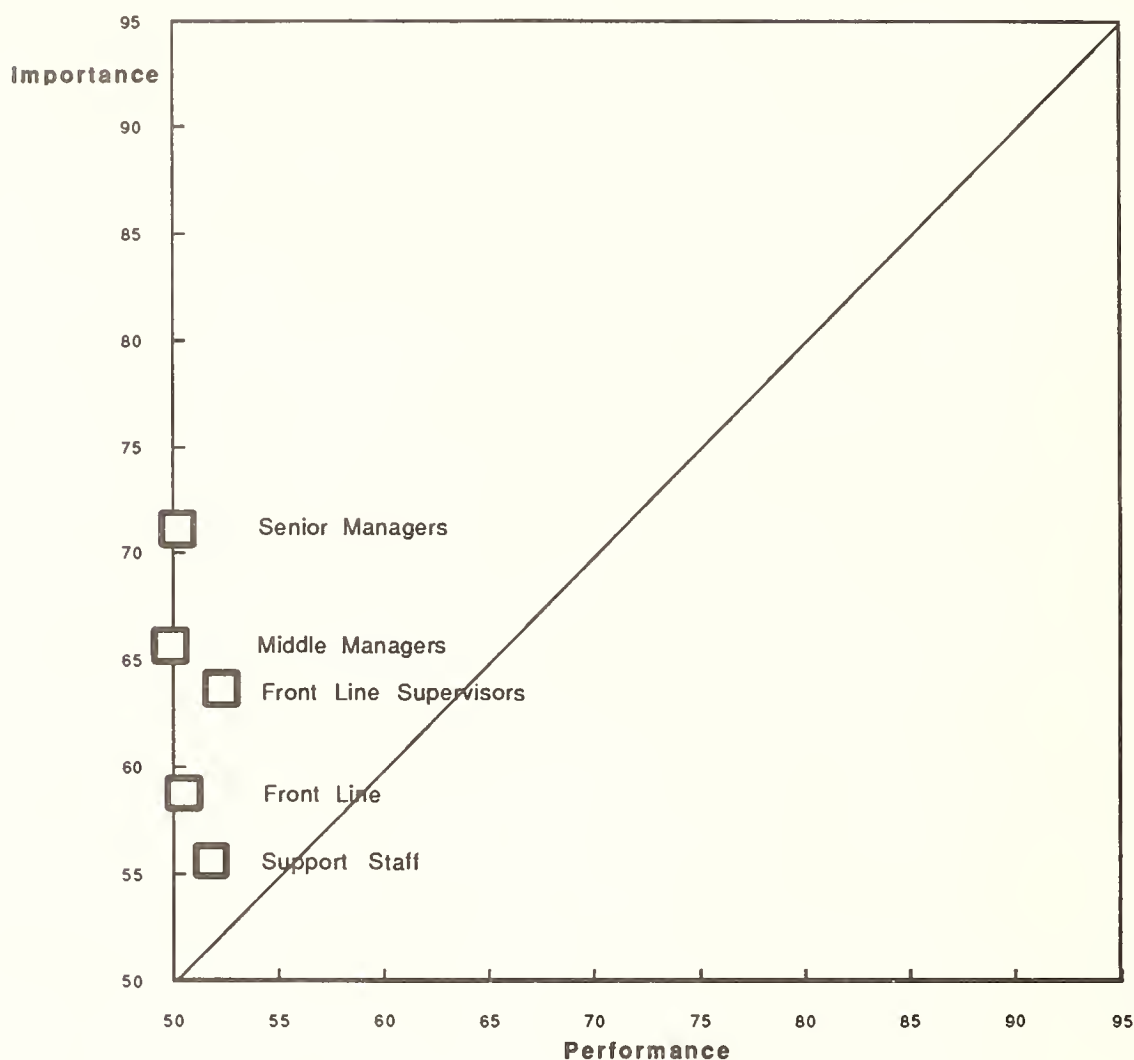


Figure 21, which reproduces the average importance and performance scores at the bottom of the preceding page, is drawn to the same scale as the charts on the service elements (e.g., Figures 18 and 19, which show OPS ratings of the 17 service elements). The comparison with this figure is striking: staff rate services they **receive** very differently than services they **provide**. Services they receive are:

- Less important
- Less well performed

The differences on the performance side are especially interesting. For example, staff who provide internal services rate their own performance at 82 out of 100. The same staff rate

performance on the internal services they receive at 52 out of 100. Staff who serve the Public make very similar assessments, rating their own performance at 84 and performance on internal services they receive at 51.

Given that OPS staff rate their own job performance highly, performance on internal services **should** be very good. What is responsible for the huge discrepancy? The cause that clearly emerges from the survey data and also from focus groups with OPS staff is that internal barriers such as bureaucracy, human resource problems, and poor communication frustrate staff's individual efforts to provide good service, both to the Public and to internal customers.

3.5 Service Elements

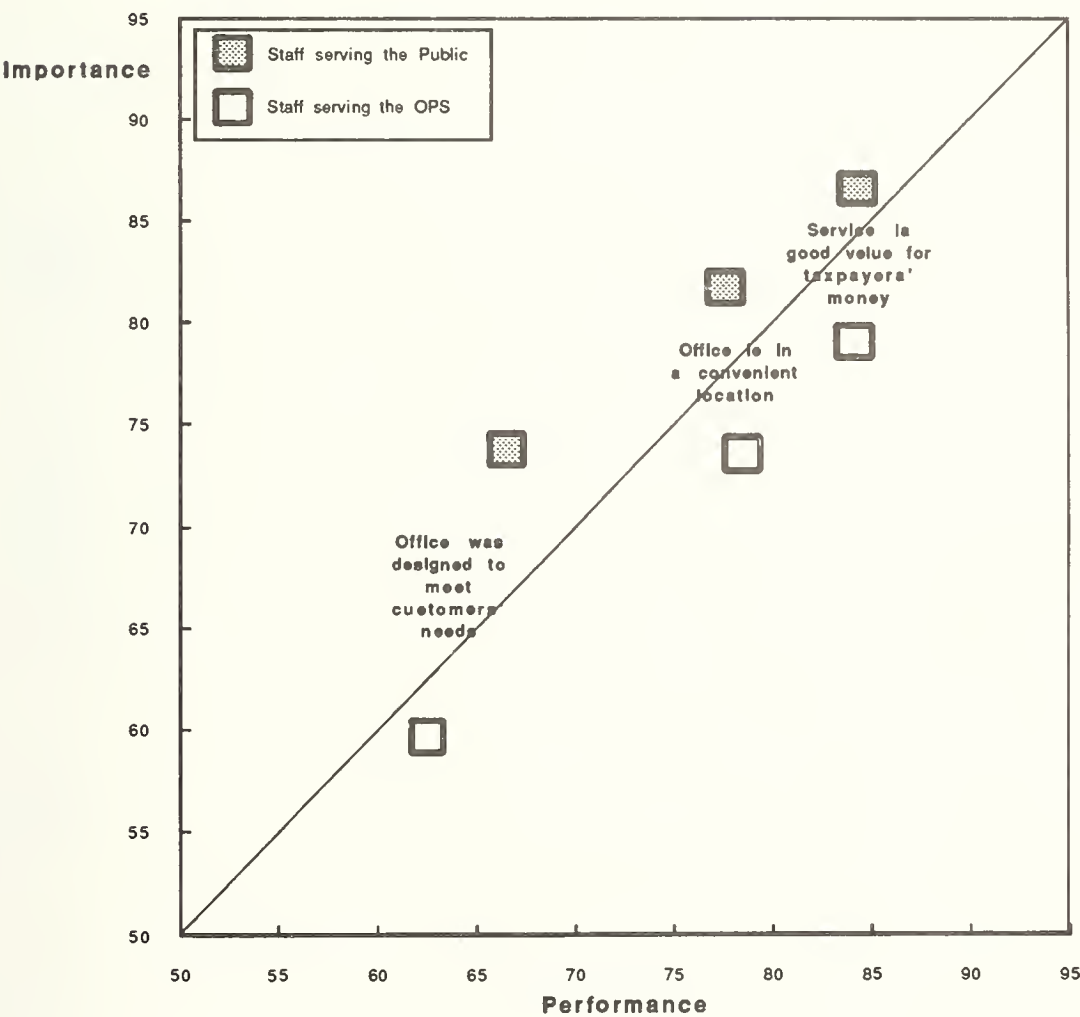
Do staff who serve internal customers share the same views on service as their counterparts serving the Public? For the most part, they do share similar views. This suggests that it should be possible to develop strategies for improving customer services that encompass both staff groups.

IMPORTANCE OF SERVICE ELEMENTS

Staff groups differ in their assessment of just three of the 17 service elements (Figure 22). In each instance, staff serving the Public rate the importance of the element higher than staff serving the OPS, while the groups do not differ in rating their own performance. The three elements are:

- The office is designed with the customer's needs in mind.
- The office is in a convenient location.
- The service is good value for the taxpayers' money.

Figure 22
Staff Serving Public and OPS Differ on Three Service Elements
OPS, 1991



3.6 Measures of Acceptable Service

Staff serving internal customers are at least as concerned about prompt service as are their counterparts serving the Public.

On the four measures where the staff groups differ to a statistically significant degree, it is always staff serving the OPS who set the stricter target. The differences are small in magnitude, for example, waiting on “hold” for 56 versus 64 seconds. Significant differences do not occur on 10 of the 14 items.

As shown above, internal services received poor performance ratings and were criticized in focus groups as slow and bureaucratic. The data in Table 46 shows that poor performance does **not** appear to stem from disregard for prompt ser-

vice on the part of individual internal service providers.

The average measures of acceptable service define a point that is acceptable to only half the staff in question. What level of service would be required to satisfy 90 percent of staff? These levels appear in Table 47, along with the Ontario Public’s data for comparison.

It is apparent that very prompt service indeed is required to satisfy 90 percent of both staff and members of the Public. Differences among the three groups are minimal.

The situation is the same whether “the customer” is the Public or the OPS: the level of service expected by the customer is very similar to the level of service defined as reasonable by the service provider.

Table 46 Measures of Acceptable Service (Average Scores) Staff Serving the Public and the OPS, 1991			
Measure	Primary Customer Public	OPS	Staff serving OPS stricter by:
Telephone service			
Number of rings before phone is answered	3.0	3.0	—
Percent of calls to get busy signal*	11.0	9.2	16 %
Percent of calls to be put on hold*	13.1	11.2	15 %
Seconds to wait on hold*	64.0	56.0	18 %
Number of transfers to get to the right person	1.2	1.3	[8] %
Minutes to complete entire activity	8.6	8.7	[1] %
Maximum number of people to deal with	2.1	2.1	—
Over-the-counter service			
Minutes before first contact with staff	2.2	2.1	5 %
Minutes to wait in a line	5.0	5.3	[6] %
Minutes to complete entire activity	14.1	14.5	[3] %
Maximum people to deal with	1.8	1.8	—
Office appointments			
Days to wait for an appointment	5.1	4.9	4 %
Minutes to wait on arrival*	4.2	3.6	14 %
Maximum number of people to deal with	1.9	1.8	5 %

* Statistically significant difference
[] Staff serving the Public set stricter targets

Table 47
Measures of Acceptable Service:
Levels That Satisfy 90 Percent of People
Ontario Public and OPS, 1991

Measure	Primary Customer Public	OPS	Ontario Public
Telephone service			
Number of rings before phone is answered	2	2	2
Percent of calls to get busy signal	0	0	0
Percent of calls to be put on hold	0	0	0
Seconds to wait on hold	30	0	30
Number of transfers to get to the right person	1	1	1
Minutes to complete entire activity	5	5	5
Maximum number of people to deal with	1	2	2
Over-the-counter service			
Minutes before first contact with staff	1	1	1
Minutes to wait in a line	1	1	3
Minutes to complete entire activity	5	5	10
Maximum people to deal with	1	1	1
Office appointments			
Days to wait for an appointment	3	3	3
Minutes to wait on arrival	1	1	3
Maximum number of people to deal with	1	1	1

3.7 Barriers to Good Service

On the five highest-ranked barriers to good service, staff who serve the OPS and staff who serve the Public do not differ to a statistically significant degree. "Lack of staff – high workloads" is the foremost barrier for both groups, followed closely by "Internal bureaucracy", "Slow approval processes", "Lack of financial incentive for good performance", and "Low morale".

COMPLEXITY

Complexity in service delivery is an important theme in the area of barriers to good service.

In each of the six instances where a statistically significant difference exists between those who serve the Public and those who serve the OPS, it is staff serving the Public who perceive the

greater barrier. A common thread unites five of the six barriers. That is **complexity** — both the complexity inherent in legislation and regulations themselves, and the complexity that results from interfacing with other ministries and governments. The five barriers related to complexity are:

- Too many regulations, guidelines
- Lack of clear language in forms and documents
- Poor knowledge of other ministries' services
- Overly complicated legislation
- Poor cooperation between OPS and other governments

While complexity related to service delivery is the dimension that differentiates staff serving the Public and the OPS, it does not follow that those serving the OPS are unaffected by complexity or indifferent to it. Complexity is also a component of the second and third highest-ranking barriers, items on which the two staff groups do not differ:

Table 48
Barriers to Good Service
All OPS, 1991

Barrier	Primary Customer		Difference
	Public	OPS	
Lack of staff – high workloads	69	68	1
Internal bureaucracy	68	68	1
Slow approval processes	62	65	– 3
Lack of financial incentive for good performance	64	60	5
Low morale within OPS	57	55	3
Poor cooperation within own ministry	51	55	– 4
Lack of staff training	55	54	1
Lack of strong management support	54	54	– 1
Vague policies	54	53	1
Lack of authority to make decisions	53	53	0
Too many regulations, guidelines *	56	50	6
Oversensitivity to political considerations	49	50	– 1
Poor cooperation among ministries	50	48	2
Lack of clear language in forms and documents *	51	43	8
Overly complicated legislation *	51	43	8
Poor knowledge of other ministries' services *	51	42	9
Outdated equipment	46	42	4
Labour-management relations	45	41	4
Poor cooperation between OPS and other governments *	42	36	7
Too many services offered	34	34	0
Lack of affordable access, e.g., 1-800 numbers *	42	23	19

Note: A positive difference denotes a higher score for those who serve the Public; a negative difference denotes the reverse

* Statistically significant difference

- Slow approval processes
- Internal bureaucracy

Confirmation that complexity is a fundamental issue is gained from reviewing the global opinion statements; both staff groups agreed with the statement "Ontario Government service keeps getting more complicated" more strongly than with any other statement.

If complexity is a primary problem, then reducing complexity in all its manifestations is clearly a necessity. Reducing complexity could help to resolve four other issues.

1. Saving money

The global opinion statement, "Improving the quality of service to the Public should save money" evoked the strongest agreement of the ten statements from the Ontario Public and the second-strongest agreement of the ten from the OPS. Reducing complexity is clearly consistent with this statement.

2. Reducing work loads

"Lack of staff/high workloads", perceived as the greatest barrier to good service, can also be remedied in part by eliminating complexity and thereby reducing workloads.

3. Improving Internal services

Focus group participants attributed poor performance on delivery of internal services to systemic barriers including bureaucracy and other forms of complexity. The survey data show that poor delivery of internal services does not appear to result from poor understanding of service or poor performance by individual providers of internal services.

4. Prompt service to the Public

Prolonged service delivery is the factor that is most strongly related to lack of satisfaction by members of the Public. Complexity of service

delivery is a likely contributor to prolonged delivery, although it may not be the only cause.

3.8 Opportunities for Improving Service

The areas identified as opportunities for improving service are highly similar for staff serving the OPS and staff serving the Public. "Lack of staff – high workloads" is the priority for both groups, by a wide margin. It follows that any action that contributes to lightening workloads will be seen by staff as a major benefit. The second- and third-ranked opportunities

Table 49 Percent of Staff Choosing Each Opportunity to Improve Service Staff Serving the Public and the OPS, 1991			
Opportunity	Primary Customer		Difference
	Public	OPS	
Lack of staff – high workloads	43	42	1
Slow approval processes	23	28	– 5
Internal bureaucracy	23	23	0
Lack of staff training	20	23	– 3
Lack of financial incentives for good performance	19	22	– 3
Lack of strong management support	15	21	– 6
Low morale within OPS	18	18	0
Poor cooperation within own ministry	14	17	– 3
Poor cooperation among ministries	14	14	0
Lack of authority to make decisions	12	14	– 2
Outdated equipment	12	12	0
Oversensitivity to political considerations	12	11	1
Lack of clear language in forms and documents	15	9	6
Too many regulations, guidelines	10	9	1
Vague policies	7	9	– 2
Poor knowledge of other ministries' services *	13	6	6
Overly complicated legislation	6	5	1
Labour-management relations	5	5	0
Too many services offered	3	4	0
Lack of affordable access, e.g., 1-800 numbers *	11	3	8
Poor co-operation between OPS & other governments	2	2	0

Note: Respondents chose those barriers that represented the greatest opportunity for improving customer service; each respondent chose up to three items

* Statistically significant difference

for both groups bear directly on reducing workloads:

- Speeding up approval processes
- Reducing internal bureaucracy

The next opportunity, fourth on the list, calls for greater staff training. The need for training is certainly consistent with the complaint of complexity in government. It is possible that the solution may be reducing complexity directly, rather than training staff to deal with it.

The trio of opportunities that ranked 5, 6, and 7 in priority deal with the general issue of recognizing the importance of people and their contribution to the common goal:

- Improved financial incentives for good performance
- Stronger management support
- Improved morale within the OPS

The largest differences between staff who serve the OPS and the Public occur in areas where di-

rect services to the Ontario Public are specifically at issue. Clearer language in forms and documents and more affordable access are seen as greater opportunities by those who deal with the Public.

3.9 What Would Make Service Better in Your Community?

On most of the eight community service issues examined in the survey, staff who serve the OPS are **more willing to extend service delivery** than those who serve the Public. This is true of extended hours of service, automated service delivery, on-line services, other-language translations, and one-stop government service centres. This fact represents a difference between those who serve internal customers versus those who serve the Public, and is independent of the job make-up of these groups¹.

Table 50 Public Transit Ontario Public and OPS, 1991					
Should customers be able to take public transit to government offices?	Staff Who Serve Public	Percent			
		Staff Who Serve OPS	Public		
Yes	94	96	93		
No	6	4	7		
	100	100	100		

Should customers be able to take public transit to government offices?	Percent				
	Front Line	Line Super	Support Staff	Mid Mgr	Sr Mgr
Yes	94	93	95	94	97
No	6	7	5	6	3
	100	100	100	100	100

Respondents who indicated that public transit is not available in their community were excluded

¹ As described earlier, the two **staff groups** (staff serving the Public and the OPS) differ in **job composition**: Staff serving the Public have a much larger proportion of front-line workers; staff serving internal customers have a larger proportion of managers. Data in Section 3.9 was analyzed to determine whether staff group and job composition are independent with respect to assessment of better service in the community. Because of small cell sizes, these tests were run after combining the five original job groups into two: Management (middle and senior) and Other (front line, supervisors, support staff). These two factors (staff group and job composition) do not interact to statistically significant degree on any measure of better service in the community.

Table 51 Parking Ontario Public and OPS, 1991					
What type of parking should the Ontario Government provide?	Percent				
	Staff Who Serve Public	Staff Who Serve OPS	Public		
At a reasonable rate	32	48	29		
Free	45	22	29		
None	24	30	42		
	100	100	100		

What type of parking should the Ontario Government provide?	Percent				
	Front Line	Line Super	Support Staff	Mid Mgr	Sr Mgr
At a reasonable rate	29	39	34	43	47
Free	49	40	40	29	25
None	21	21	26	28	27
	100	100	100	100	100

Statistically significant differences occur:

- Between Public and OPS as a whole
- Between OPS serving internal and external customers
- Among OPS job groups

PUBLIC TRANSIT

In communities where public transit is available, there is a clear consensus that customers should be able to reach Ontario Government offices by transit (Table 50). Neither the difference between OPS and the Public, nor the difference among job groups, is statistically significant.

PARKING

The majority of staff believe that the Government should provide parking for customers (Table 51). Those who live in larger cities are more likely to support parking at a reasonable rate, as opposed to free parking. The difference between OPS groups is partly attributable to this dynamic: OPS serving internal customers are located predominantly in Toronto, where the expectation of getting free parking is lower than in smaller centres. Looking at job groups, free parking is supported most strongly by non-management staff; management more

often chose parking at a reasonable rate. The Ontario Public is less likely than OPS to think that the Ontario Government should provide parking.

TRANSLATION INTO LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH AND FRENCH

Staff who serve internal customers are more likely than staff serving the Public to support other-language translation of all kinds (Table 52).

Management, both senior and middle managers, are more likely to support other-language translation than other staff.

EXTENDED HOURS OF SERVICE

Staff serving the OPS are very close to the Public in their strong support for extended hours of service (Table 53). The majority of staff serving the Public are against extended hours.

Table 52
Support for Other-Language Translation in Three Areas
Ontario Public and OPS, 1991

Service	Percent in favour of other-language services		
	Staff Who Serve Public	Staff Who Serve OPS	Public
Publications *	29	39	24 ‡
Telephone services *	20	30	26
Counter services *	20	32	28 ‡
Any services; type unspecified *	38	52	42
* Statistically significant difference between OPS groups ‡ Statistically significant difference between Public and OPS as a whole			

Service	Percent in favour of other-language services				
	Front Line	Line Super	Support Staff	Mid Mgr	Sr Mgr
Publications *	27	28	24	39	44
Telephone services *	20	14	23	27	30
Counter services *	19	17	22	31	28
Any services; type unspecified *	36	36	37	50	52
* Statistically significant difference among job groups					

It would appear that staff serving the Public anticipate having to work Saturdays and/or evenings, while staff serving the OPS might anticipate that they will not be involved.

Among OPS job groups, those who work with the Public and whose work would be most directly affected by extended hours of service oppose the idea, while management tend to support it.

A related question, asked of those who favour extended service, posed three ways of extending hours (Table 54). Both OPS groups are more willing to consider adding to the total hours of service than the Public. The two OPS groups do not differ to a statistically significant degree.

OPS job groups do not differ to a statistically significant degree.

AUTOMATED SERVICES

Within the OPS, support for automated services is stronger among those serving the OPS than among those serving the Public (Table 55).

Both OPS groups support automated services to a greater degree than does the Ontario Public. As noted above, the questionnaire did not present specific examples of automated service delivery. It is possible that OPS staff are more aware of how automated services could be applied to the public service than are customers, and so more ready to accept the idea.

There is a strong difference in support for automated services between management, who are clearly in favour of automated service delivery — and other staff, who are mixed in their response.

Table 53 Support for Extended Hours of Service Ontario Public and OPS, 1991			
Should government office hours be extended?	Staff Who Serve Public	Percent	
		Staff Who Serve OPS	Public
Should not be extended	60	33	27
Open one or more evenings a week	24	40	40
Open Saturdays	3	4	10
Open both evenings and Saturdays	13	22	23
	100	100	100

	Percent				
	Front Line	Line Super	Support Staff	Mid Mgr	Sr Mgr
Should not be extended	63	54	57	42	33
Open one or more evenings a week	24	31	25	33	31
Open Saturdays	3	3	4	3	3
Open both evenings and Saturdays	10	12	14	22	32
	100	100	100	100	100

Statistically significant differences occur:

- Between Public and OPS as a whole
- Between OPS serving internal and external customers
- Among OPS job groups

Table 54 Options for Extending Hours of Service Ontario Public and OPS, 1991					
How should extended hours be implemented?	Staff Who Serve Public	Percent			
		Staff Who Serve OPS	Public		
Extended hours must be in addition to present hours	63	56	43		
Open later some weekday mornings	27	34	44		
Close one weekday	10	10	13		
	100	100	100		
	Percent				
	Front Line	Line Super	Support Staff	Mid Mgr	Sr Mgr
Extended hours must be in addition to present hours	63	58	55	58	61
Open later some weekday mornings	24	31	33	32	32
Close one weekday	13	12	12	11	7
	100	100	100	100	100

Statistically significant differences occur:

- Between Public and OPS as a whole

Table 55
Support for Automated Services
 Ontario Public and OPS, 1991

Should the government make services available by automated machines?	Percent		
	Staff Who Serve Public	Staff Who Serve OPS	Public
Yes	45	65	35
No	31	16	23
No opinion	24	19	42
	100	100	100

	Percent				
	Front Line	Line Super	Support Staff	Mid Mgr	Sr Mgr
Yes	42	50	46	65	79
No	34	32	30	19	7
No opinion	24	19	24	16	14
	100	100	100	100	100

Statistically significant differences occur:

- Between Public and OPS as a whole
- Between OPS serving internal and external customers
- Among OPS job groups

PUBLIC ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT ON-LINE SERVICES

Within the OPS, support for Public access to on-line services is lower than support for automated services in the style of banking machines (Table 56).

Similar to automated services, support for Public access to on-line services is higher among managers than among other staff.

ONE-STOP CENTRE FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES

A large majority of both staff groups favour the idea of one-stop Government centres (Table 57). Those who serve the Public are less likely to support centres that combine provincial and municipal services than staff who serve internal customers.

Table 56
Support for Public Access to On-Line Services
 Ontario Public and OPS, 1991

Should the government make its on-line services available to the Public?	Percent				
	Staff Who Serve Public	Staff Who Serve OPS	Public		
Yes	31	44	40		
No	42	35	29		
No opinion	27	20	32		
	100	100	100		

	Percent				
	Front Line	Line Super	Support Staff	Mid Mgr	Sr Mgr
Yes	28	38	26	47	57
No	43	39	48	33	27
No opinion	29	23	27	20	16
	100	100	100	100	100

Statistically significant differences occur:

- Between Public and OPS as a whole
- Between OPS serving internal and external customers
- Among OPS job groups

Table 57
Support for One-Stop Government Centres
 Ontario Public and OPS, 1991

Are you in favour of a one-stop centre where people can get different services in one building?	Percent		
	Staff Who Serve Public	Staff Who Serve OPS	Public
No: not in favour	22	17	13
Yes: for Ontario Government services only	50	45	37
Yes: for both Ontario and municipal services	28	38	50
	100	100	100

	Percent				
	Front Line	Line Super	Support Staff	Mid Mgr	Sr Mgr
No: not in favour	27	16	19	20	15
Yes: for Ontario Government services only	46	53	52	46	47
Yes: for both Ontario and municipal services	26	31	30	35	38
	100	100	100	100	100

Statistically significant differences occur:

- Between Public and OPS as a whole
- Between OPS serving internal and external customers
- Among OPS job groups

Appendices



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Xerox Canada

Ministry of Revenue

Ministry of Colleges and Universities

Amdahl Canada

Ministry of Natural Resources

Ministry of Financial Institutions

AMP Canada



SURVEY METHOD

SURVEY CONTENT

Issues addressed in the survey were defined in two ways:

- In consultation with members of the Customer Service Task Force and Customer Service Steering Committee of the Government of Ontario.
- In separate consultations with members of the Ontario Public and OPS staff. These consultations occurred in the seven focus groups held in Sudbury, Peterborough and Toronto in May 1991.

Specific survey questions were developed, tested, and revised in the focus groups. In particular, these groups served as the primary forum for developing questions in three areas where consultation with a broad spectrum of people is crucial:

- Global opinions of Ontario Government service
- Elements of service quality
- Measures of acceptable service

A written questionnaire was chosen over a telephone survey because of the length of the survey and the complexity of some questions, especially in the OPS version. The written format also provided space for respondents to write anonymous comments. This proved to be a valuable source of information, as an unexpectedly large proportion of respondents — one-half of the total — wrote commentaries.

STEPS TO ENSURE ACCEPTABILITY TO RESPONDENTS

Several key steps were taken to ensure clarity and comprehensiveness:

- Sections of the survey were pretested with both the Public and the OPS to clarify terminology and to ensure that the surveys focused on issues of substance to these groups.
- The surveys were reviewed by the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, an expert in clear language, the Freedom of Information and Privacy Branch, the Office of Francophone Affairs, and the Ministry of Citizenship.

SAMPLE SELECTION AND RETURN RATE

Public

The Public sample was drawn on a random basis from computer files of residential telephone numbers in Ontario. Telephone exchanges of both Bell Canada and the more than 30 local telephone companies in Ontario were included in the sample. The English language survey was distributed to a sample of 10,172 persons.

To ensure adequate Francophone representation, the French language version of the questionnaire was mailed to an additional 500 Francophones selected from a mailing list maintained by the Province's Office of Francophone Affairs.

The sample of telephone numbers provides only one name per household, that of the person who holds the account with the telephone company. In order to select a respondent at random within each household, the questionnaire specified that the person aged 18 or over with the next birthday should complete the survey.

Public surveys included a letter of introduction from Premier Bob Rae. They were mailed the week of July 1, 1991, with a request that respondents return the completed questionnaire by July 31. Returns were accepted through to August 7, 1991.

In all, 2,258 questionnaires were received, resulting in a Public return rate of 21 percent.

OPS

OPS employees were selected at random from the government's payroll list. Senior management makes up only about 2 percent of OPS personnel, so to obtain a sufficient number of senior employees for statistical analysis, this group was over-selected. In analyzing and reporting OPS data, the full complement of senior managers is only used when different job groups are directly compared. At all other times, data provided by senior managers are weighted down by a factor of 7 to reflect this group's actual size within the OPS. The OPS sample totalled 7,982 employees.

OPS questionnaires were mailed the week of July 1, 1991, with a request to return completed surveys by July 31. In order to comply with privacy regulations, questionnaires were mailed by the Ontario Government directly to OPS employees at their homes. OPS surveys included a letter of introduction from Fred Upshaw, President of OPSEU, and Glenna Carr, then Deputy Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, now Secretary to Management Board of Cabinet. Returns were accepted through to August 7, 1991.

In all, 1,999 questionnaires were received, giving an OPS return rate of 25 percent.

DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

The questionnaire return rates of greater than 20 percent are high in the context of survey research. They provide a firm basis for understanding both Public and OPS perceptions of customer service.

Returns from the Ontario Public closely approximate the distribution of the Ontario population across regions of the province. Public data were weighted on the basis of age and gender to match population values, using Statistics Canada's 1991 postcensal estimates for the province. The weighting procedure ensures that deviations from population parameters, which are inherent in any survey of this nature, do not skew results.

The weighted and unweighted data for the Public sample were compared to assess the effect of weighting, and values for the two sets of data were typically within one percent of each other. Although the weighting has only a minimal effect, the weighted data are reported as they provide a more accurate reflection of Public opinion.

OPS data are weighted in most analyses to compensate for the intentional over-sampling of senior management. They are not weighted where job groups within the OPS are directly compared, and the full complement of senior managers is necessary for statistical analysis.

The surveys used 7-point response scales to obtain ratings of performance and other measures. Results are reported using scales that range from 0 to 100, where 0 means "Strongly Disagree" or "Very Poor", and 100 means, "Strongly Agree" or "Very Good". This format is more intuitive from the reader's perspective. In some instances, the seven options are reduced to three in order to report the percentage of respondents who agree and disagree with a statement. In this case, options 1, 2, and 3 constitute the "disagree" group, options 5, 6, and 7 constitute the "agree" group, and option 4 represents a "neutral" group who neither agree nor disagree.

In keeping with common usage, the term “average” is used throughout the report in place of the statistical term “mean”.

The term “statistically significant” is applied to results that would be expected to occur 19 times out of 20 ($\alpha < .05$). When a group of comparisons is under consideration, such as with the set of 10 Global Opinion Statements, the criterion of statistical significance is adjusted to maintain a .05 standard of reliability for the set of items as a whole.

In reporting demographic analyses, such as differences based on age, region of the province, and so on, results are generally reported as significant when they are 1) statistically significant, and 2) the effect in question accounts for at least one percent of the total variance. In most cases, these two criteria lead to the same conclusion.

Analysis of Anglophone and Francophone sub-samples

Views of Anglophone and Francophone respondents are compared in section 1.9 of this report. Francophone respondents include all those in the French-language sub-sample and also persons in the general random sample who identified French as their preferred language. The French sub-sample consists of 198 persons, or 9 percent of the total.

Four percent of respondents stated that they preferred to use English and French equally. Examination of this group's data showed their responses to survey items to be about mid-way between the Francophone and Anglophone samples. It is possible that this bilingual group contains a mixture of Franco-Ontarians and Anglophones who speak French. As the actual composition of this group is not clear, it was excluded from comparisons between Anglophones and Francophones.

Having defined the Anglophone and Francophone groups in this way, the two sub-samples were weighted independently on the basis of age and gender. This second weighting was used only in comparisons of Anglophone and Francophone opinion; in all other analyses, weights were based on the composition of the total sample.



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YOUR VIEWS OF ONTARIO GOVERNMENT SERVICE



What do you think about the service of the Ontario government?

The Ontario government wants to improve the service it gives the public.

This independent survey has been commissioned to find out what Ontario Public Service employees think about service to the public. Please help by completing this questionnaire.

The survey has been sent to employees at all levels of all Ministries. It will therefore provide information on services that the Ontario government as a whole provides to the public. Results will not be used to compare individual Ministries.

Your answers are strictly confidential, and your participation is anonymous. Your comments will receive careful consideration.

Please return this questionnaire *no later than Wednesday July 31, 1991* in the enclosed envelope. The postage is already paid.

Thank you for your contribution!

1. Overall quality of service

From the public's perspective, how good is the service provided by each level of government? (Circle one number in each row.)

Government	Quality of Service (according to the public)						
	Extremely Poor			Extremely Good			
The federal government (Ottawa)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The provincial government (Ontario)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Municipal governments (city, town)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Services you get from others in the OPS

Below are nine general services you get from other OPS employees.

- How important is each type of service to you in your present job?
- How good a job does the OPS do in providing each service?

Services you get from other OPS employees	How Important is this service in your work?							How good a job does the OPS do in providing this service?						
	<i>Not at all Important</i>			<i>Extremely Important</i>				<i>Extremely Poor</i>			<i>Extremely Good</i>			
Accommodation and transportation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Human resources	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Administration	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Purchasing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Information, communication, marketing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Information technology	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Legal services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Finance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Policy formulation and program design	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Categories of service

The Ontario government provides four general types of service directly to the public:

- Information
- Registration
- Financial Assistance
- Enforcement and Justice

Note that these categories do not include services specific to single ministries such as Provincial Parks, Recreation, LCBO, Tourism and direct health care provided by nursing homes. These are beyond the scope of this survey.

Which one category below best describes your present work in the OPS?

- ☐ *Information*
- ☐ *Registration*
- ☐ *Financial Assistance*
- ☐ *Enforcement and Justice*
- ☐ *Other (e.g. Tourism, Recreation, Emergency Response Services, the LCBO, direct health care.)*

INFORMATION SERVICES. *Examples are:*

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Inquiry, referral;</i> | General inquiries, consumer complaints, employment inquiries, interpretation of laws. |
| <i>Counselling;</i> | Vocational rehabilitation, advice to small businesses, advice to industry, apprenticeship counselling. |
| <i>Public awareness;</i> | Environmental issues, social services, consumer information, safe-driving campaigns. |

REGISTRATION SERVICES. *Examples are:*

- | | |
|---|--|
| <i>Licensing, permits, certificates;</i> | Fishing licences, lotteries and bingo, births, deaths, marriages, trades qualifications. |
| <i>Examinations, testing;</i> | Pesticide use, hunters' safety, apprenticeship programs, drivers' licences. |
| <i>Registration;</i> | Land registry, company names, child care facilities, firearms registration. |

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES. *Examples are:*

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Grants, rebates;</i> | Northern travel grants, Ontario Tax Credits, senior citizens' tax rebates, farm tax rebates, rent rebates. |
| <i>Financial assistance;</i> | Family Benefits Allowance, Guaranteed Annual Income Supplement for seniors, loans to business, student loans, Northern Ontario Heritage Fund. |
| <i>Insurance claims;</i> | Workers' compensation, OHIP, emergency measures claims, accidents on government property. |

ENFORCEMENT & JUSTICE SERVICES. *Examples are:*

- | | |
|--|---|
| <i>Inspections, audits, investigations;</i> | Construction inspections, vehicle inspections, pollution monitoring, employment standards investigations. |
| <i>Debt collection, recovery of overpayments;</i> | Student loan repayments, income maintenance overpayments, motor vehicle accident claims. |
| <i>Justice;</i> | Child custody, Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), probation and parole, human rights. |

4. *Opinions about the service of the Ontario government*

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement below? (Circle one number in each row.)

Opinion (based on interviews with the public and OPS employees)	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
Ontario government service keeps getting more complicated.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Overall, the service of the Ontario government is getting better.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ontario government services provide good value for taxpayers' money.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The language used in forms and documents is hard to understand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It often seems that regulations and policies are not applied consistently.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe that the Ontario government treats members of the public equally, regardless of gender, age, race, culture or ability.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Staff dealing directly with the public are properly trained and qualified.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Staff are overworked and cannot give customers individual attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Improving the quality of service to the public should save money.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel that people in cities get better service than do people in towns and rural areas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. Quality of service

Who is the primary customer of your services? (Check one box only.)

- ☐ *The public. (This includes residents of Ontario, private businesses, service professionals, and transfer payment agencies.)*
- ☐ *The government of Ontario and employees of the Ontario Public Service.*

The questions on the following page focus on your interaction with customers.

- If your area's primary function is to provide services to the public (i.e., you checked the first box above), think of your customers as members of the public.
- If your area's primary function is to provide services within the OPS (i.e., you checked the second box above), think of your customers as the OPS.

Please describe your present job using the statements on the following page.

- If a service element does not apply to your work, don't answer the questions for it.
- Your immediate work group includes people with whom you work and those for whom you are responsible.

Service elements	How important is this element to your customer?		How good is your own performance on this element?		How good is the performance of your work group?	
	Not at all Important	Extremely Important	Extremely Poor	Extremely Good	Extremely Poor	Extremely Good
Our service is there when customers need it.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
Employees in our service take pride in their work.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
It is easy for customers to get to the right person and department.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
We are courteous and helpful.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
We are knowledgeable and competent.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
We communicate clearly and are easy to talk to.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
Customers get what they need in a reasonable period of time.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
We understand customers' needs fully.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
We protect customers' confidentiality.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
The service is good value for customers' tax dollars.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
Procedures are easy for customers to understand and complete.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
We are direct and give straight answers to customers' questions.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
Customers get a quick response to their requests.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
We provide up-to-date, accurate information.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
When customers talk to different employees, we provide consistent information.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
Our office is in a convenient location.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
Our office is designed with the customer's needs in mind.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	

6. Opportunities for improving customer service

Listed below are 21 items that could be barriers to providing good customer service. Indicate how much, if at all, each barrier affects your service to your customers.

- If you deal with the public, either directly or in a supervisory role, think of barriers as things that affect your service to the public.
- If your customers are others within the OPS, think of barriers as things that affect your service to the OPS.

Possible barriers to good customer service	Not a Barrier							Critical Barrier
1. Lack of clear language in forms and documents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2. Over-sensitivity to political considerations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3. Lack of staff training	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
4. Lack of affordable access, such as 1-800 telephone numbers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
5. Lack of specific knowledge of other Ministries' services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6. Lack of cooperation among provincial Ministries	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
7. Lack of cooperation within your own Ministry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8. Lack of sufficient staff — high workloads	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
9. Internal bureaucracy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
10. Labour-management relations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
11. Overly complicated legislation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
12. Slow approval processes — too many layers of approval	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
13. Outdated equipment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
14. Lack of financial incentives for good performance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
15. Lack of cooperation between the OPS and other levels of government	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
16. Low morale within the OPS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
17. Vague policies	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
18. Too many regulations and guidelines	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
19. Too many services are offered	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
20. Lack of strong support from management	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
21. Lack of authority to make decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

in terms of your own work, which three items or barriers on the preceding page represent the best opportunities for improving customer service? (Circle three numbers below.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21

We are interested in your suggestions for improving the government’s customer service. Please write your ideas on the back cover.

7. What makes good service?

When customers contact you on a routine matter, they probably have a good idea of the time their business will take. They may be pleasantly surprised if things go more quickly than planned, or annoyed if the business takes too long.

Please indicate below what you consider a reasonable and acceptable level of service in your own work.

What do you consider satisfactory service when a customer **writes** to your office?

How many days should it take from the time your office receives a customer's letter until the appropriate reply is sent? (Circle your choice.)

Number of days: 5 or less 6 to 10 11 to 14 15 to 19 20 to 24 25 or more

What do you consider satisfactory service when a customer **telephones** your office?

How many rings should the customer wait before someone answers the phone?

Number of rings: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 or more

What percent of the time should the customer expect a busy signal?

Percentage of times: 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 or more

What percent of the time is it reasonable for you to put the customer on hold?

Percentage of times: 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 or more

What is a reasonable length of time for the customer to wait on hold?

Number of minutes: 0 1/2 1 2 3 4 5 or more

What is a reasonable number of transfers for the customer to expect before getting the right person?

Number of transfers: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 or more

What is an acceptable amount of time for the entire activity — from the time the customer dials the number until she/he hangs up?

Number of minutes: 5 10 15 20 30 40 50 60 or more

What is the maximum number of people the customer should have to deal with to get the service?

Number of people: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 or more

What do you consider satisfactory service when a customer **visits** your office to obtain a routine "over-the-counter" service?

How many minutes is it reasonable for the customer to wait before someone first makes contact with him/her?

Number of minutes: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 or more

How many minutes should the customer have to wait in any line-up?

Number of minutes: 1 2-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20-29 30 or more

What is an acceptable amount of time for the entire activity — from the time the customer enters the office until he/she leaves?

Number of minutes: 5 10 15 20 30 40 50 60 or more

How many different people should the customer have to deal with in order to get service?

Number of people: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 or more

For some services, customers may **make an appointment** with you or someone in your office.

What is a reasonable number of days from the time the customer makes the appointment until the date of the appointment?

Number of days: 1 2-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20-29 30 or more

How long should the customer have to wait once she/he arrives for the appointment?

Number of minutes: 1 2-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20-29 30 or more

What is the maximum number of people that the customer should have to deal with to get what she/he needs?

Number of people: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 or more

8. *Good service in your community*

Answer the following questions about your own community.

1. What type of parking should the Ontario government provide in your community?

- ☐ *Parking at a reasonable rate.*
- ☐ *Free parking.*
- ☐ *The government should not be concerned with providing parking.*

2. Should customers be able to take public transportation to Ontario government offices?

- ☐ *Yes*
- ☐ *No*
- ☐ *There is no public transportation in my community.*

3. Should translation into languages other than English or French be available? (Check each type of service you think should be available in other languages.)

- ☐ *Publications*
- ☐ *Over-the-counter services*
- ☐ *Telephone inquiries*
- ☐ *No other translations should be available*

4. Office hours in most Ontario government offices are 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Should we extend these hours of service? (Choose one answer.)

- ☐ *Office hours should not be extended.*
- ☐ *Offices should be open one or more evenings a week.*
- ☐ *Offices should be open Saturdays.*
- ☐ *Offices should be open both one or more evenings and Saturdays.*

5. If you think that Ontario government offices should be open some evenings and/or Saturdays, are you in favour of reduced hours of service during the normal business day?

- ☐ *No, the extended hours should be in addition to present hours of operation.*
- ☐ *Yes, they could open later some weekday mornings.*
- ☐ *Yes, they could close one weekday.*

6. Should the Ontario government make services available to the public by means of automated machines? These might operate like banking machines.

- ☐ *Yes*
- ☐ *No*
- ☐ *No opinion*

7. Should the Ontario government make its on-line computer services available to the public?

- ☐ *Yes*
- ☐ *No*
- ☐ *No opinion*

8. Are you in favour of having a one-stop government centre where people can get different services in one building?

- ☐ *No: not in favour.*
- ☐ *Yes: for Ontario government services only.*
- ☐ *Yes: a single office for both provincial and municipal services.*

9. You and your work

All of your answers are confidential. They will be combined with the answers of other OPS employees to form general conclusions.

1. Where do you presently work?

- ☐ *Metropolitan Toronto*
- ☐ *City of 100,000 people or more*
- ☐ *City of 10,000 to 100,000*
- ☐ *Town or village (under 10,000 people)*
- ☐ *Rural area*

2. In which region of the province do you work?

- ☐ *Central, including greater Toronto area*
- ☐ *South-east*
- ☐ *South-west*
- ☐ *North-east (including: Nipissing, Parry Sound, Manitoulin, Sudbury, Timiskaming, Cochrane, Algoma)*
- ☐ *North-west (including: Thunder Bay, Rainy River, Kenora)*

3. Which of the following do you use on a regular basis, in either your personal or business life? Check as many as apply to you.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ <i>Computer</i> | ☐ <i>Automated banking machine</i> |
| ☐ <i>Fax machine</i> | ☐ <i>On-line access to a data system</i> |
| ☐ <i>Electronic mail (E-mail)</i> | ☐ <i>Telephone answering machine</i> |

4. What is your age? Check the appropriate response.

- ☐ *18-24 years*
- ☐ *25-34 years*
- ☐ *35-49 years*
- ☐ *50-64 years*
- ☐ *65 years or more*

5. Are you female or male?

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| ☐ <i>Female</i> | ☐ <i>Male</i> |
|--|--------------------------------------|

6. Are you a member of a racial minority group?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ☐ <i>Yes</i> | ☐ <i>No</i> |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|

7. Do you have a long-term physical or mental disability?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ☐ <i>Yes</i> | ☐ <i>No</i> |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|

8. What is your present job within the OPS?

- ☐ *Front line — you deal directly with the public, third parties, transfer payment agencies*
- ☐ *First line supervisor*
- ☐ *Middle manager*
- ☐ *Senior manager*
- ☐ *Support services*
- ☐ *Other*

9. In your present job, do you have internal customers within the OPS?

- ☐ *Yes, I have internal customers*
- ☐ *No, I do not have internal customers.*

Do you have any additional comments regarding the service of the Ontario government? Your suggestions and ideas for improving customer service are very important!

Thank you for your valuable time and ideas!

For further information: Erin Research Inc., RR 2 Erin Ontario, N0B 1T0



YOUR VIEWS OF ONTARIO GOVERNMENT SERVICE



What do you think about the service you get from the Ontario government?

The Ontario government wants to improve the service it gives the public.

This independent survey has been commissioned to find out what Ontario residents think and want. Please help by completing this questionnaire.

Your household was selected on a random basis. Your answers are strictly confidential, and your participation is anonymous.

The person in your household **who is 18 years of age or older and whose birthday occurs next** should complete this questionnaire.

Please return this questionnaire *no later than Wednesday July 31, 1991* in the enclosed envelope. The postage is already paid.

Thank you for your contribution!

1. Overall quality of service

Some organizations usually give good service, some may not. How good is the service that you get from each of the following organizations? (Circle the appropriate number.)

Organization	Overall Quality of Service						
	Extremely Poor						Extremely Good
Your municipal government (city, town)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A supermarket that you go to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The federal government (Ottawa)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The provincial government (Ontario)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A department store that you go to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Your bank or trust company	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Canada Post	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. *Services of different governments*

The Ontario government is interested in making the public more aware of the services it provides.

Which government do you think provides each of the services below. (Check one answer in each row.)

Service	Which government provides this service?			
	<i>Municipal</i> (town, city)	<i>Provincial</i> (Ontario)	<i>Federal</i> (Ottawa)	<i>Not sure</i>
Workers' compensation	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unemployment insurance	☐	☐	☐	☐
Birth certificates	☐	☐	☐	☐
Immigration	☐	☐	☐	☐
Motor vehicle registration	☐	☐	☐	☐
Landlord and tenant regulations	☐	☐	☐	☐
Welfare payments	☐	☐	☐	☐
Customs	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. *Getting information about the services of the Ontario government*

You can get information about the services of the Ontario government from different sources. For each source of information below, answer the following questions:

- Do you know about this source of information?
- How many times have you used it in the past year?
- Were you satisfied with it?

If you do not know about a source of information, circle "no" and go on to the next source of information.

Source of Information	Do you know about this source?	How many times have you used it in the past year?			Were you satisfied with it?	
		None	1 to 3 times	4 times or more	Not at all satisfied	Very satisfied
Blue pages in your telephone book	Yes No	☐	☐	☐	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
Community Information Centres (CICs)	Yes No	☐	☐	☐	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
Citizens' Inquiry Bureau, Access Ontario, Access London	Yes No	☐	☐	☐	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
Constituency office of your MPP (Member of Provincial Parliament)	Yes No	☐	☐	☐	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
KWIC Index of Ontario Government Services	Yes No	☐	☐	☐	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
Ontario Government Telephone Book	Yes No	☐	☐	☐	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
An 800 or Zenith number, e.g. Zenith Ontario	Yes No	☐	☐	☐	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	

In Northern Ontario:

Ministry of Northern Development and Mines	Yes No	☐	☐	☐	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
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4. Four types of government service

The Ontario government provides four general types of service directly to the public:

- Information
- Registration
- Financial Assistance
- Enforcement and Justice

These are the services that the Ontario government provides directly to the public — they do not include services of hospitals, schools, legal aid agencies, or other “third party” organizations.

Read the description of each type of service, then answer the questions that follow it.

INFORMATION SERVICES. *Examples are:*

<i>Inquiry, referral;</i>	General inquiries, consumer complaints, employment inquiries, interpretation of laws.
<i>Counselling;</i>	Vocational rehabilitation, advice to small businesses, advice to industry, apprenticeship counselling.
<i>Public awareness;</i>	Environmental issues, social services, consumer information, safe-driving campaigns.

1. How many times have you used **information services** of the Ontario government in the past year?

- ☐ *None* ☐ *Once* ☐ *2 to 5 times* ☐ *6 times or more*

2. Overall, how satisfied were you with the quality of service you got?

Not at all satisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Very satisfied*

REGISTRATION SERVICES. *Examples are:*

<i>Licensing, permits, certificates;</i>	Fishing licences, lotteries and bingos, births, deaths, marriages, trades qualifications.
<i>Examinations, testing;</i>	Pesticide use, hunters' safety, apprenticeship programs, drivers' licences.
<i>Registration;</i>	Land registry, company names, child care facilities, firearms registration.

1. How many times have you used **registration services** of the Ontario government in the past year?

- ☐ *None* ☐ *Once* ☐ *2 to 5 times* ☐ *6 times or more*

2. Overall, how satisfied were you with the quality of service you got?

Not at all satisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Very satisfied*

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES. *Examples are:*

- Grants, rebates;*

Northern travel grants, Ontario Tax Credits, senior citizens' tax rebates, farm tax rebates, rent rebates.
- Financial assistance;*

Family Benefits Allowance, Guaranteed Annual Income Supplement for seniors, loans to business, student loans, Northern Ontario Heritage Fund.
- Insurance claims;*

Workers' compensation, OHIP, emergency measures claims, accidents on government property.

1. How many times have you used financial assistance services of the Ontario government in the past year?

☐ None

☐ Once

☐ 2 to 5 times

☐ 6 times or more
2. Overall, how satisfied were you with the quality of service you got?

Not at all satisfied

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

Very satisfied

○

ENFORCEMENT & JUSTICE SERVICES. *Examples are:*

- Inspections, audits, investigations;*

Construction Inspections, vehicle inspections, pollution monitoring, employment standards investigations.
- Debt collection, recovery of overpayments;*

Student loan repayments, Income maintenance overpayments, motor vehicle accident claims.
- Justice;*

Child custody, Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), probation and parole, human rights.

1. How many times have you used enforcement and justice services of the Ontario government in the past year?

☐ None

☐ Once

☐ 2 to 5 times

☐ 6 times or more
2. Overall, how satisfied were you with the quality of service you got?

Not at all satisfied

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

Very satisfied

5. A recent experience with Ontario government service

In the box below, write the name of a recent service you got directly from the Ontario government, for example, a birth certificate, registration for your company name or landlord and tenant information.

Note: Do not use a driver's licence unless it is the only Ontario government service you got during the past year.

Do not include services of hospitals, schools, legal agencies, etc. These are not direct government services.

1. Which category best describes this service? (You can refer to pages 4 and 5 for examples of the four types of service.)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| ☐ Information | ☐ Financial assistance |
| ☐ Registration | ☐ Enforcement and Justice |

2. Did you need this service for personal or business reasons?

- ☐ Personal ☐ Business ☐ Both

3. Was it a legal requirement to obtain this service? For example, you must have a licence to drive a vehicle.

- ☐ Yes, the service was a legal requirement.
☐ No, it was not.
☐ Not sure.

4. Was it an emergency?

- ☐ Yes, it was an emergency. ☐ No, it was not.

5. How many separate contacts did it take to get the service? A contact is each separate phone call, office visit, letter, etc.

- ☐ One contact ☐ 2 or 3 contacts ☐ 4 or more contacts

6. How long did the entire experience take to complete?

- ☐ Up to 1 day
☐ Up to 1 week
☐ Up to 1 month
☐ Up to 3 months
☐ More than 3 months

7. How did you receive this service? (Check a box for each option that applies.)

- ☐ You visited a government office
☐ A government representative visited your location
☐ By mail
☐ By phone
☐ By fax machine
☐ By computer: on-line access

Please describe your experience with this service:

Your experience with the service	How important was this?		How good was the Ontario government's performance?	
	Not at all Important	Extremely Important	Extremely Poor	Extremely Good
The service was there when I needed it.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
Staff took pride in their work.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
It was easy to get to the right person and department.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
Staff were courteous and helpful.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
Staff were knowledgeable and competent.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
Staff communicated clearly and were easy to talk to.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
I got what I needed in a reasonable period of time.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
The staff understood my needs fully.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
My confidentiality was protected.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
The service was good value for my tax dollars.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
Procedures were easy for me to understand and complete.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
Staff were direct and gave straight answers to my questions.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
I received a quick response to my request.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
I was given up-to-date, accurate information.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
I got the same information from different people I talked to.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		1 2 3 4 5 6 7	

If you visited a government office:

The office was in a convenient location.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
The office seemed to be designed with my needs in mind.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. What makes good service?

What is acceptable service from the Ontario government when you:

- write
- telephone
- visit an office
- make an appointment?

When you **write** to an Ontario government office with a routine request:

How many days should it take from the time you send a letter until you receive the information you need? (Circle your choice.)

Number of days: 5 or less 6 to 10 11 to 14 15 to 19 20 to 24 25 or more

When you **telephone** an Ontario government office for a routine request:

How many rings should you have to wait before someone answers the phone?

Number of rings: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 or more

What percent of the time should you expect a busy signal when you call an Ontario government office?

Percentage of times: 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 or more

What percent of the time is it acceptable to be put on hold by the person answering?

Percentage of times: 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 or more

How many minutes is it acceptable to wait on hold?

Number of minutes: 0 1/2 1 2 3 4 5 or more

What is a reasonable number of transfers before you get to the right person?

Number of transfers: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 or more

What is an acceptable amount of time for the entire activity — from the time you dial the number until the time you hang up?

Number of minutes: 5 10 15 20 30 40 50 60 or more

What is the maximum number of people you should have to deal with to get what you need?

Number of people: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 or more

When you **visit** an Ontario government office to obtain a routine “over-the-counter” service:

How many minutes is it acceptable to wait before you first make contact with a government employee?

Number of minutes: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 or more

How many minutes is it acceptable to wait in any line-up?

Number of minutes: 1 2-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20-29 30 or more

What is an acceptable amount of time for the entire activity — from the time you enter the office until you leave?

Number of minutes: 5 10 15 20 30 40 50 60 or more

How many different people is it acceptable to deal with to get what you need?

Number of people: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 or more

What is an acceptable amount of time for you to travel to get from your home or place of work to a government office?

Number of minutes: 5 10 15 20 30 40 50 60 or more

When you **make an appointment** with an Ontario government employee:

How many days is it acceptable to wait from the time you make the appointment until the date of the appointment?

Number of days: 1 2-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20-29 30 or more

How many minutes is it acceptable to wait once you arrive for your appointment?

Number of minutes: 1 2-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20-29 30 or more

What is the maximum number of people you should have to deal with in order to get what you need?

Number of people: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 or more

7. Opinions about the service of the Ontario government

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement? (Circle one number in each row.)

Opinion (based on interviews with the public)	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>				<i>Strongly Agree</i>		
Ontario government service keeps getting more complicated.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Overall, the service of the Ontario government is getting better.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ontario government services provide good value for taxpayers' money.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The language used in forms and documents is hard to understand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It often seems that regulations and policies are not applied consistently.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe that the Ontario government treats members of the public equally, regardless of gender, age, race, culture or ability.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Staff dealing directly with the public are properly trained and qualified.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Staff are overworked and cannot give customers individual attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Improving the quality of service to the public should save money.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel that people in cities get better service than do people in towns and rural areas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. *Good service in your community*

Answer the following questions about your community.

1. What type of parking should the Ontario government provide in your community?

- ☐ *Parking at a reasonable rate.*
- ☐ *Free parking.*
- ☐ *The government should not be concerned with providing parking.*

2. Should you be able to take public transportation to Ontario government offices?

- ☐ *Yes*
- ☐ *No*
- ☐ *There is no public transportation in my community.*

3. Should translation into languages other than English or French be available? (Check each type of service you think should be available in other languages.)

- ☐ *Publications*
- ☐ *Over-the-counter services*
- ☐ *Telephone inquiries*
- ☐ *No other translations should be available*

4. Office hours in most Ontario government offices are 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Should we extend these hours of service? (Choose one answer.)

- ☐ *Office hours should not be extended.*
- ☐ *Offices should be open one or more evenings a week.*
- ☐ *Offices should be open Saturdays.*
- ☐ *Offices should be open both one or more evenings and Saturdays.*

5. If you think that Ontario government offices should be open some evenings and/or Saturdays, are you in favour of reduced hours of service during the normal business day?

- ☐ *No, the extended hours should be in addition to present hours of operation.*
- ☐ *Yes, they could open later some weekday mornings.*
- ☐ *Yes, they could close one weekday.*

6. Should the Ontario government make services available to the public by means of automated machines? These might operate like banking machines.

- ☐ *Yes*
- ☐ *No*
- ☐ *No opinion*

7. Should the Ontario government make its on-line computer services available to the public?

- ☐ *Yes*
- ☐ *No*
- ☐ *No opinion*

8. Are you in favour of having a one-stop government centre where people can get different services in one building?

- ☐ *No: not in favour.*
- ☐ *Yes: for Ontario government services only.*
- ☐ *Yes: a single office for both provincial and municipal services.*

9. You and your household

Your answers are completely confidential. We will combine them with other peoples' answers to form general conclusions.

1. In which region of the province do you live?

- ☐ *Central, including greater Toronto area*
- ☐ *South-east*
- ☐ *South-west*
- ☐ *North-east (Including: Nipissing, Parry Sound, Manitoulin, Sudbury, Timiskaming, Cochrane, Algoma)*
- ☐ *North-west (Including: Thunder Bay, Rainy River, Kenora)*

2. Where do you presently live?

- ☐ *Metropolitan Toronto*
- ☐ *City of 100,000 people or more*
- ☐ *City of 10,000 to 100,000*
- ☐ *Town or village (under 10,000 people)*
- ☐ *Rural area*

3. What are the first three digits of your postal code?

____ _

4. Which of the following do you use on a regular basis, in either your personal or business life? (Check as many as apply to you.)

- ☐ *Computer*
- ☐ *Automated banking machine*
- ☐ *Fax machine*
- ☐ *On-line access to a data system*
- ☐ *Electronic mail (E-mail)*
- ☐ *Telephone answering machine*

5. What is your age?

- ☐ *18-24 years*
- ☐ *25-34 years*
- ☐ *35-49 years*
- ☐ *50-64 years*
- ☐ *65 years or more*

6. Are you female or male?

- ☐ *Female*
- ☐ *Male*

7. Are you a member of a racial minority group?

☐ Yes

☐ No

8. Do you have a long-term physical or mental disability?

☐ Yes

☐ No

9. What formal education do you have?

☐ Some public and/or high school

☐ Completed high school

☐ Some college or university

☐ Completed college or university

10. Which language do you prefer to use?

☐ English

☐ French

☐ English and French equally

☐ Other

11. What is your present occupation?

☐ Professional

☐ Office work, sales, service

☐ Business manager, executive, small business owner

☐ Trades, factory work

☐ Homemaker

☐ Retired

☐ Student

☐ Other

12. Are you an employee of any of the following organizations?

☐ Federal government

☐ Ontario government

☐ Municipal government

☐ No: I am not a government employee

13. Do you presently have a paid job?

☐ Yes, full time

☐ Yes, part time

☐ No

14. What is the combined income of all members of your household before taxes?

☐ Under \$10,000

☐ \$10,000 to \$29,000

☐ \$30,000 to \$49,999

☐ \$50,000 to \$69,999

☐ \$70,000 to \$89,000

☐ \$90,000 or more

Do you have any additional comments regarding the service of the Ontario government? Your suggestions and ideas for improving customer service are very important!

Thank you for your valuable time and ideas!

For further information: Erin Research Inc., RR 2 Erin Ontario, N0B 1T0

Customer Service Steering Committee

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